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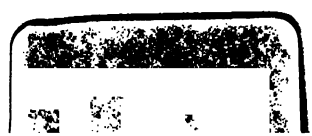

A

Rational and Historical

ACCOUNT

OF THE

PRINCIPLES

Which gave Birth to the

Late *REBELLION*,

And of the present

CONTROVERSIES

OF THE

English CLERGY.

By JONATHAN SMEDLEY, *A. M.*
Rector of *Ringcurrane*, &c.

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TO

The Right Honourable the

Lord *CADOGAN.*

My LORD,

THE World cannot but excuſe me (whatever Your Lordſhip may do) for prefixing Your Name to a Diſcourſe, wherein the Late *Rebellion* is often mention'd: Becauſe the important Share which You bore in putting the *ſpeedieſt* End to it, is the univerſal Subject of Acknowledgment and Praiſe.

By many proſperous Campaigns, and ſucceſsful Negociations; by every thing admir'd in a Stateſman, and eminent in a Soldier: But above all by a *Conſtancy of Principle*, and that ever employ'd for the

Good of Your Country, You long contributed to keep the worſt of Evils from deſtroying theſe Nations; and, when thro' *Perjury* and *Parricidiſm*, we were at length, made a Prey unto them, it is a ſhining Part of Your Glory, that an Arbitrary Popiſh *Pretender*, and His Foreign, as well as Domeſtick Abettors, were then *ſoon* taught, that Slavery and Popery, Trepidity and Ill Conduct, a bad Cauſe and worſe Hearts, muſt give way to contrary Vertues.

But, Juſtice, no doubt, will be done to your Lordſhip's Merit, by thoſe who write for Poſterity: 'Tis Pleaſure enough to me, that I live to pay this Tribute to Your Many and Great Services, in defence of the late injur'd and betray'd, but at preſent triumphant Liberty, and flouriſhing Religion of theſe Realms; begging Leave, amongſt Crowds, to ſubſcribe my ſelf,

My LORD,

Your LORDSHIP's *moſt Obliged, moſt Humble, and moſt Obedient Servant,*

Jonathan Smedley.

THE

PREFACE.

Am very ſenſible of the Danger which attends every one, who, at this Time, attempts to write in Vindication of the Liberty and Freedom of Mankind; eſpecially as it relates to the Privilege of judging for themſelves in Matters of Conſcience and Eternal Salvation: That ancient Tyrant and Uſurper, Humane Authority, *having deeply rooted it ſelf in the Minds of too many of our* Engliſh *Subjects.*

Amongſt other Reaſons of this Misfortune, it is chiefly owing to that Enchantment, whereby the Word Church *is made to confine Mens Opinions and Sentiments, to the jejune and rigid Rules of* one *Set of Men; from whom to*

dif-

differ (tho' they be fallible or erroneous,) is unhappily reckon'd to destroy that Church, and consequently to pull down every thing that is vertuous or true.

However melancholy this Evil may be in it self, we are yet infested with another on the account of it, of a more heinous Nature, if that be possible; which is, that Persons, possess'd of more generous and enlarged Principles, are not allow'd to propagate those Principles, tho' in the most warrantable and decent Manner, without risquing the Insults of Personal Reflections and Abuse; and this, more than barbarous, Practice is become so shamefully and abominably in use, and so far exceeds any thing of the sort in Ages past, and is so foul a Reproach and Scandal to the present Times, that I know not what Atonement those Persons will make, who were so unfortunate as to introduce it.

To keep my self clear from Things of this Nature, I have neither named the Persons engag'd now in publick Controversy, nor touch'd upon their Writings, save one Passage alone [p. 15. & seq.] *of the Bishop of* Bangor's Preservative, *which his Enemies allow to be true.*

What

What induces me to appear in publick upon this Occasion, is, that I may contribute my Share (whatever it be) towards a Work which Providence seems to design for the Lot and Portion of our Days; the opening and commencing at least the Cause of Truth; tho' I fear the full Triumphs of it must be reserv'd for the Labours of Times yet to come; and this, I hope, in some degree I have accomplish'd, by laying open the Falsities whereon our present and late Misunderstandings and Misfortunes were first grafted, and afterwards flourish'd; and having thereby attempted to free these Nations from that Bondage both of thinking and acting, which for many Years past, has, most shamefully, been forc'd upon them: Nor cou'd I forbear treating this Subject in the Manner I do, (however trite or tiresome any one may imagine it to be) because I daily hear the same Things urg'd with the old Invidiousness and ill Design; and because (without the Spirit of Prophesy) one may foretell they will again be put in Practice, by their Favourers, on the first fresh Occasion, in hopes of better Success; and therefore it cannot be amiss to prepare the Remedy against any Time

wherein

wherein the same Wounds shall afflict our Nations, and her Enemies, by the same Instruments, shall make her bleed anew.

If any one shall think I favour our Protestant Dissenters too much, I would have him to understand, that no more is design'd them in the following Book, than what they ought to enjoy as they are Men and Protestants; and to observe, that I freely own my self amongst the Number of those who conceive the Cry of Danger from that Side to be entirely artful and false, it being morally impossible that Presbytery *in the* Church, *and a* Common-wealth *in the* State, *should ever be* Establish'd *in* England.

There was a Time when those Things had their only Chance, [in the Troubles of 1641, &c.] *and yet nothing that and permanent of this Sort appear'd, during the continual Changes, which then happen'd in several Years together. No, not in that such a Design was form'd at the Beginning of those Troubles; [illegible] lately a Time, that [illegible] Formalities and Conceits could [illegible] but the Restoration of the [illegible]; many Forms of Settlements having been attempted,*

ed, but all in vain; a better than the old one, and the present, not having been devis'd in near 6000 *Years; no, nor being likely to be devis'd in* 60000 *more: Wherefore this must and will prevail.*

As to the present pretended fear of Presbytery *in particular, it is so groundless, that truly speaking, most of our Protestant Dissenters are mere* Independents; *every Teacher is sole Director; the particular Congregations choose him, and he and they observe a sort of Church-Power together, Excommunicate one another,* &c. *without a Thought of Conventions, Synods, or the like general Power of a conven'd Clergy to exercise Church-Government and Authority amongst them: And how soon such a Ministration would decay and vanish, any Man, that thinks, may tell, wou'd the Members of the Establish'd Church but once overlook and neglect the Humour of these private Meetings, wou'd they but seldom mention them, or their Affairs; or, when they did, if it was always done in a good-natur'd and charitable Way.*

I cannot forbear insisting thus long on this Subject, that People may (if possible) be con-

vinc'd of the Fallacy of spiriting up a Danger from Men and Things, which have no Weight or Interest in themselves, no Strength from their own Nature to buoy or keep them up, or which have not any reasonable Support or Credit from without; neither from domestick or foreign Power and Force; and that I may inculcate over, and over, that this is all Artifice and Cheat, fomented and kept warm from a Third Hand; real Popery *designing to stalk in upon us, under the Shadow and Appearance of Presbytery and a Common-wealth; and these Things I hope will fully be made to appear in the following Discourse.*

I have dealt so very freely with those Clergymen whose Sermons in the Pulpits, and Discourse and Actions in Conversation, or elsewhere have favour'd the Pretender's Title and Interest, that I am obliged here to declare once for all, that these Men, strictly taken, are the only Clergymen pointed at in the ensuing Papers. Those who are not, or were not guilty, are far from being accus'd by me; and those who are, or have been guilty, these are the very Men I arraign and condemn. Many, I am satisfied, of this Sort can be produc'd, pray God the

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Number may lessen Day by Day; but the Body of the Clergy, I never yet intended, or thought of in this Matter.

I have the Honour to be of that Order my self, and know several, God be thanked, *who acted a quite different Part; for very many of whom I can affirm (as I do for myself) that they are as truly affected to our* English *Constitution, and better Friends to the true Church and State of* England, *than the highest and most rigid of their Brethren.*

I must add at last, that if we are now, or soon may become in Danger of any new Confusions, they only can arise from that base Defection and Rage which at present infests and infatuates some of those Men, who by long, honest, hazardous, and successful Struggles having defeated every thing that cou'd disturb or overturn our happy Constitution, having vanquish'd the common Enemy, most monstrously, without any Reason, are become Enemies to, and quarrel with their Fellow-Conquerors and Friends.

Had one from the Dead, a few Years since, prophesy'd this, I shou'd have pronounc'd his Predictions false and impossible; wondering

what

what Evil Spirit influences Men (the common Passions of Mankind being unequal to this Work) to turn APOSTATES *from honest* Principles; Principles *which have actuated them for Years, for a whole Life together; especially after the severest Sufferings for these* Principles *in Time past, and the Enjoyment now of all the happy Consequences they ever expected from them, their* Religion, *their* Liberties, *their* Laws, *the* Protestant Succession, *and the most desirable of all* Princes *at the Head of it; a* Prince, *much too good and indulgent for such ingrateful* Subjects. *To pray for whom, that every thing happy and prosperous may attend him, in a long and healthful Life, to wish continual Success to him and his Affairs, and that Disgrace and Disappointment (at least) may be the Portion of his Enemies, is the Interest and Duty of every true* Briton, *and cannot fail to carry its own Accomplishment and Reward along with it; this being visibly grateful and pleasing to* God, *and the Designs of his* Providence *in these* Nations.

INTRO-

INTRODUCTION.

NOtwithſtanding the known Difficulties which attend Perſons who write concerning any Publick Tranſactions of their own Times; Such *Writers* being Subject to the inevitable Calumny and Reproach of ſerving the Deſigns of ſome particular Party of Men, of being either Flatterers or Detractors, of wilful Omiſſions, unfair Enlargements, or, it may be, Prevarication it ſelf: And their *Work* being expos'd to Cenſure, Contradiction, and that languiſhment of Reading, if not entire Diſlike, which ever ariſes from the Knowledge and Acquaintance that every Reader is ſuppoſed, in ſome meaſure, to have of the Contents of it beforehand. Notwithſtanding all this, and whatever elſe may be ſaid either

 against

against me, or what I here present to the World; I am resolv'd to go thro' and sustain it after the best Manner I am able, and will give this as a Reason for so doing, That I write directly from my Heart and Conscience, without any Expectation of present Rewards, and without any Attachment to the Persons of Men: And this, I hope, will induce the Candid of all Sorts, with good Nature to peruse what here I offer to their Consideration, and will excuse the Insufficiency of the Performance, because of the Honesty and Usefulness that are intended by it. There is no avoiding Perswasion, when a Man has thoroughly examin'd an Affair; nor can he forbear determining, upon full Evidence, on both Sides of a Question. This I protest to be sincerely my Case in all the Variety of the ensuing Argumentations; and having never observ'd hitherto that right Justice has been done, either to the Things I write of, or to the Men I shall hereafter mention, I thought it my Duty to publish my Sentiments about them to the World in the clearest and strongest Lights that I am Master of: Setting my self about this Work for this last Reason above all, That I may endeavour to unprejudice the misguided Populace of these Islands, by that very familiar and uncover'd Manner wherein I treat it; and that I may contribute towards the Quietness of these Kingdoms, and the peaceable Reign of his present Majesty and his Successors, as well as that due

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Gratulations and Praises may be more universally (than hitherto) paid to the confess'd Providence of Almighty God, which made miraculous Steps for the *Introduction* of the Protestant Succession in the Illustrious House of *Hannover*; and which, by many wondrous and amazing Incidents, prevented the *Dispossession* of it, when it had taken place.

CHAP. I.

SECT. I.

Heinousness of the Rebellion.

WE may consult the Histories of Rebellions in the several Kingdoms of the World, till our Industry and Curiosity are tired; we may trace them to their Original, and entertain our Hours in perusing the Methods whereby they were at first fomented, and afterwards brought to Maturity: And this if we do, and much more, if we behold their Events, and view them in their Consequences, there are none of them (no! not our own) which can parallel this last in *Great Britain*, for the Extravagancy of Principle whereon it was built; the Unaccountableness of that Delusion whereby it was carried on; and which, by the Artifice of a few, spread itself thro' the greatest Part of the Populace; and for the speedy *Reduction* and Disappearance of it, though

it had been long concerted, was deeply laid, and appear'd most formidable at the beginning. Men formerly rose and took up Arms in Defence of their Country or Religion; and, to sustain themselves, confederated with others of the same Interest and Principle, with Allies and Friends to the Constitution of their Nation: But our late Rebels acted the very Reverse of all this; for *Englishmen* and *Protestants* arm'd themselves to the certain Destruction of both those Privileges; and join'd with every sworn Enemy to the happy Establishment of their Native Land*. When Men formerly rais'd civil Commotions at Home, it was generally to defend themselves against the lawless Power and Tyranny of their Prince or Governours, that they might either bring them to Reason in their Administration, or, by displacing them, raise to sovereign Power the next qualify'd Person or Persons; such as were capable and inclinable to do 'em Good; and such as by Birth, or otherways, were entitled to the Royal Dignities and Honours of the Kingdom: But, in Contradiction to all this, and to shew how nationally Mad it is possible for a People to become, Men in our Days have array'd themselves in Arms against the Mildest of Princes, ruling strictly according to the Letter of the Law; and have

* Irish Papists, Scoth Highlanders, Frenchmen, Spaniards, Italians, *and Foreigners of many Nations, who thro' zeal for* Rome, *or thro' Indigency and Want, listed to set a* Popish Pretender *on the Throne of* England.

rais'd

rais'd Tumult and War in the Midſt of Peace, univerſal Proſperity, and the greateſt Liberty and Freedom that Subjects can endure, or wiſh for: So that our Poſterity (amongſt the Miracles of Time) will have it to ſay, That they had Anceſtors in ſuch a Year, who (when a Free People) could, and did Rebel, to make themſelves Slaves; ſome of whom hazarded, others loſt their Lives, in ſtriving to reduce themſelves and their Survivors to a political State and Condition worſe than Death itſelf; and who endeavour'd to dethrone a Prince, by Birth entitl'd, and by Education fitted, to their Conſtitution; in order to bring in another, whoſe Title the firſt Way was diſputed by ſome, deny'd by many; but who, by the latter, was a ſworn Enemy to every Thing that is *Engliſh* and *Reformed*. In ſhort, *Proteſtant* Subjects then rebell'd, to bring in a *Popiſh* Governour, (tho' they knew him to be a Bigot in that Religion, not even pretending to make the leaſt Terms and Conditions for what they wou'd be thought to Fight for; a Free Nation engaged in a Civil War, to be govern'd by an arbitrary Prince: and they, who ſhared in making their own Laws, fighting to reſign this Priviledge to him, whoſe ſole Will muſt ever have been a Law unto them. One Thing indeed the *Leaders* of theſe Men had in View, which was common with this and other Rebellions, and that was, from blackening the Lawful Government at firſt by the *wildeſt*, *falſeſt* of Inventions, and by Terms

fitted

fitted and calculated to this peculiar Season of Sedition; and then from raising the Voice of the Multitude into Murmurs and Complaints afterwards, till by degrees the Trumpet came to be loudly blown, and we fell a Prey to the most open Acts of Hostility and Rebellion, to enrich and aggrandize themselves amidst universal Confusions, and to raise their own Families and Fortunes out of the publick Ruine of their Country.

SECT. II.

What moved the Protestants, who headed the Faction, to go into Measures which favour'd the Pretender.

AS to profess'd *Papists*, what mov'd them to act their Share in this Rebellion, and what they expected for their Labour, the meanest Capacity can give an Account of; and therefore one can't but allow, that the only true Cause which engag'd the *Heads* of our *British Protestants*, and many of their chief Followers, in this monstrous Undertaking, was nothing but the Expectation of becoming *Rich*, and *Powerful* and *Great*; for I shall shew what won the unthinking † Multitude, before I conclude this Discourse.

HENCE the Malecontents amongst the *Laity* bluster'd under the awful Umbrage of

† *Mob was the Word in Use at this time, and Mobbing a Thing which was of the last great Use to this base Set of Men.*

the

the *Church*, and distinguish'd themselves into the Affections of the People by the specious Appearance of being Her Preservers and Supporters: And many of the *Clergy*, on the other Hand, most gratefully return'd the Compliment, representing those Persons as fittest to fill the Civil Offices of State who took such extraordinary Care in maintaining the Rights and Priviledges of the *Church*. But alas! these mutual good Offices, this plausible Association for the Benefit of the Kingdom, was all Hypocrisy and Cheat; for the better Part of the *Clergy* knew that the *Church of England* cou'd not be in any *Danger*, but from that *Popery* which then thicken'd in upon us by the Collusion now mention'd, the *House of Hannover* being bred to a *Protestant*, *Episcopal Church*, and having no Security for their Continuance here, but an inviolable Preservation of the *Church of England* upon those very Terms whereon they found it fix'd at their Accession to the Throne; and the better Part both of the *Clergy* and *Laity* knew, that the Leaders of these wicked Men were bred up in those very Principles, and had early abetted that very Party from whence this imaginary pretended Danger was to come; They knew that so little was their true concern either for the establish'd Church or State, or indeed for any Religion, or Good Principles at all, that these Men would, and did expose these Things, *viz.* their *English* Liberties and Privileges both Sacred and Civil, to the Management of an enraged

Stranger,

Stranger, † in whom there could be no Inclination, from any one reason, to preserve 'em, and who was incapable of any greater Merit than to deface and destroy 'em: Thus when a sufficient Number of the Clergy and Laity were deceiv'd, and hood-wink'd into the common Delusion, and had deceiv'd and hood-wink'd others agen for a considerable time, then was the Loose at once given to Revenge, Ambition, and Interest, and *down*, just down had tumbled every thing that was Free, every thing that was Protestant in the Land; had not Providence wonderfully interpos'd.

SECT. III.

Their Fallacy further set forth.

I Have promis'd a particular Detail of the general Arguments whereby the Multitude was deceiv'd into so great an Absurdity, that they rebell'd to bring that thing to pass, for the avoiding of which they had been so artfully, so cunningly taught to Rebell; *viz.* The total Eversion and Ruin of the *Brittish* Constitution, but I cannot in the mean time conceal that their Leaders were free, and void of every Principle, but *Hypocrisy*, and a Desire of being Rich and Great, of pleasing Themselves, tho' the World was shaking to pieces, and perishing about them: For, as to the real Things which were pretended only in this Con-

† *Being a bigotted Papist himself, and his Father and He being banished by the Members of the Church of England.*

troversy;

troverſy; *viz.* The Security of the Religion and Liberties of the People on one hand, and the Power of the Prince, and the Prieſthood on the other; The two latter being ſtrain'd and ſcrew'd up to a monſtrous height, to ſuit the Genius of the Times: And the former being either overlook'd, or quite ſunk and loſt, in the warm Regards that were, with great Induſtry, paid to the others, as including the Safety of the whole: and all theſe and every thing elſe being wrap'd up in Artifice and Guile, Men telling you the impoſſibility of thoſe frightful Conſequences, which at the ſame time were as viſible as that the Actors themſelves were then above Ground; I ſay, theſe real Cauſes, that were alledg'd for the Tranſactions of thoſe Times, were ſo little at the Hearts of theſe Men who tranſacted them, and the Miſchiefs reſulting from theſe Actions ſo unavoidable, ſo glaring and diſcernable, that no Character can be drawn black enough, no Puniſhment devis'd equal to their Crimes, who for private Ends, could allow themſelves to Cheat, Deſtroy, and Undo their Country; and who, tho' they enjoy'd all that happy and ſatisfied Men, cou'd even wiſh for under King *George*: deep Quietneſs, ſolid Peace, their Lives, their Eſtates, their Liberties, their Church, and were depriv'd only of that Power which they had abus'd, and thoſe Places which they knew they did not Deſerve: wou'd nevertheleſs for theſe Things, and theſe alone, break thro'

the most sacred Ties of repeated Oaths, raise their Countrymen into Unsettledness, Faction and Rebellion, and rather than not be employ'd in Publick Managements, employ themselves in Things of publick Confusion and Disorder.

SECT. IV.

Shewing how they would have been disappointed had they succeeded.

BUT alas! What is the true Construction of all this? It is that Passion so blinded these Men, that they were not able to see through the whole of that Melancholly Affair, wherein they were engag'd. For questionless, Success to them cou'd (at last) produce nothing less than an entire change of the very Nature of every thing that was *English* in the Land; and must of Necessity reduce all *Brittain* to a Popish, and a foreign Appearance. 'Twou'd have been impossible for them to have stop'd when once they and their Prince had in earnest begun; and every Knee must certainly either have bow'd to the whole Service of the new Idol, or have liv'd in continual Trembling, Disgrace and Despair. A sad Dilemma! the best Part of which must conclude in Sorrow and Shame. For what Pain had not such Men endur'd? what Racks had they not undergone (even supposing they had reconcil'd themselves to every new Method) from the *Officiousness*, and Insolence of crowding) but

Po-

Popiſh) Foreigners? whoſe ſuperior Merits, earlier Services, and heavier Sufferings for the injur'd Prince would quite out-balance and obliterate the late Domeſtick Tormentors of Perjury and a ſeditious Temper, and wou'd cancel all the Obligations a plain Engliſhman had laid on his Unfortunate Sovereign, by drudging on in the meritorious Way of a Malecontent, and ſo venturing Poverty and Death, for many Years together.—— In ſhort, Reaſon cannot but tell them, that the *Pretender* is ſo loaded with irreſiſtable Demands from various Strangers, (many of whom make the firſt Figure amongſt Men,) that all the Poſts, Civil, Eceleſiaſtical and Military; all his new Impoſitions on the Subject; all the Old and Legal Revenues of the Kingdom (ſhou'd he ever be ſettled amongſt us) will never be able to anſwer the Ambition or Wants of his numerous Patrons and Followers; our Nation would be the Sink of many other Kingdoms; our Natives every moment overlook'd, affronted, deſpis'd; Careſs'd at firſt, but at length entirely diſcarded and laid aſide: Till, wearied with Bigottry and Superſtition, harraſs'd with Subjection and Diſappointment, diſguſted with ſtrange Manners and Uſages, and continually inſulted by Upſtart Aliens: From Languiſhing and Repining, they'd agen turn down-right Rebels, and endeavour by a ſecond Civil War to free themſelves from that very State of Things, to introduce which they had perjur'd themſelves, and thought it con-

 venient

venient to raise Inteſtine Commotions (even to Blood) before. But! who knows whether Lawful reſiſtance now wou'd be able to take Place, after long Poſſeſſion, and large Triumphs of Succeſsful Rebellions?

CHAP. II.

Wherein are particularly Diſplay'd, the falſe Arguments whereby the Leaders perſuaded the Multitude to fall into thoſe Meaſures which ended in Rebellion.

HAVING given ſo Black an Account of the Leaders of this Mottly Inſurrection; it may very well be expected (and may not be unworthy the Reader's peruſal) that ſome Enlargement be made on the Reaſons which induc'd ſo many of the common People to fall in with Meaſures deſtructive of their Religion and Liberties; and to expoſe in a plain Light that finiſh'd Degree of Artifice, which intercepted their Diſcernment of the infamous and execrable Deſigns of thoſe who had Power enough with them, (implicitly) to engage 'em in Things moſt impious and wrong, and which manifeſtly tended to their own undoing.

SECT. I.

hing the Artifice of Leaders of Parties, &c. in general.

HATEVER Complaints are made by Divines and Moralists of the natural livity and Viciousness of Human Nature in eral: We may observe that the Wicked- of particular Bodies of Men (consider'd as) is frequently owing to the Influence of a ; concerning the Excellence of whose Un- tanding, or Rectitude of whose Will the ltitude are prejudic'd on the favourable ; or whose Eminence of Birth, and Ad- tages of Experience, Education or For- gives them an immediate Awe or Com- d over such whose very Dependance on others sets them in the Light of Gods and efactors, and consequently points them as Directors and Guides to their Thoughts, vell as their Actions. Upon this Footing , that we never read of any publick spiri- or enterprizing Men who were enclin'd do any great Actions, and to set them- es at the Head of remarkable Revolutions Changes, such as founding, altering or an- lating Governments, enslaving or freeing Nations, introducing or abolishing a Reli- n; commencing War, or making Peace: that they temper'd themselves and their ions sometime before-hand, with peculiar rns of Distinction and Observation till at last

last they spoke out, and established some particular Principle on which to fix all the Thoughts of their Assistants, and which alone shou'd inspirit them in the whole Course of their Attempts, and struggle to accomplish their Ends.

SECT. II.

Exhibiting an Example from ancient Rome, &c.

THUS when the *Roman* King * was enclin'd to establish a *Religion*, he feigned a frequent Congress with a † *Goddess* in secret, whereby having confirm'd the Opinion of invisible Beings he carry'd himself safe thro' all the Parts and Ceremonies of the Worship of the Gods: obtaining hereby what Superstitions he pleas'd towards them, as well as Obedience to the State, and Morality towards Men.

THUS also when *Rome* grew weary of her Kings, the glorious Consul gave out *Liberty* for the Word, and thereby inflam'd some, and animated others to that Height of Heroism which was wanted to make it a free and flourishing Commonwealth.

THE Glory of Arms and *Military* Atchievements succeeded Liberty: Civilizing Nations and being Lovers and Benefactors of Mankind at other Times buoy'd up the *Roman*

* *Numa.*
† *Egeria.*

Genius

Genius to successful Labours and Toil in War. Their * Gods and Families, Religion and Liberty in modern Language was the Trumpet blown to their Fleets and Armies: Till at length 'twas thought enough to inspire 'em with Honour and Courage, to incite 'em to the greatest military Hardships and Glory, and to induce them to undertake whatever advanc'd the Name and Dignity of their Government, to render 'em valiant and virtuous, and all that is laudable and good, by telling a Man that he was a *Roman*.

Nor was it less customary in other Nations to enliven their Votaries and Subjects to the boldest and noblest of Actions by applying the Idea of all that is honourable and Praise-worthy to some remarkable Terms of Art, and impressing them strongly on the Imagination of the Instruments of their Schemes.

To pass by any more Examples, for they are numerous in History, 'twas to this was owing in a great Measure the Defeat of the Army and Destruction of the Cause of one of our own Monarchs † by the Hands of violent Rebels, headed by a celebrated but infamous ‖Usurper: and I doubt not but all that

* Pro Aris & focis.

† *King* Charles I.

‖ Oliver Cromwel; *who at first observing his Forces to be generally worsted, resolv'd his ill Fortune into the Principles which animated the King's Army*, viz. Monarchy *and* Episcopacy, *to countervail which, he successfully actuated his Men with the Appellation of Saints, and the Imagination* that they immediately *fought for the Grace and Favour of God.*

Life

Life and Vigour, that Joy in Arms and those successful glorious Campaigns wherewith Providence of late Years permitted our *English* Soldiery to be bless'd, and which dispirited the Minds of our vaunting and vanquish'd Enemies, was owing to the noble Principles of our glorious * General, as well as to his inimitable Skill and Conduct in Military Actions, and the Example of his Bravery and Courage. The *Liberty* of his Country, and Success of the *Protestant* Cause, being Things so vertuous, so exalted in their own Nature, and so firmly fix'd in his Heart, that his Army wanted only to regard what it was which invigorated him, wanted no Motive but this to conquer and defeat that Man, who, with too assuming an Emphasis stil'd himself *Great*; and who proudly once declar'd War, (tho' then and ever unsuccessful thro' the Iniquity of his Cause) only for the Glory of his Army.

I HAVE dwelt the longer on this Subject because Posterity will never be able to make a right Judgment of the Times wherein we live, without being appriz'd that the general Tast, and publick Disposition of Mens Minds, was so whimsical and depraved, that they could not bear with any thing that was real, or which carried its own Assent strongly along with it: But that Appearances, nay Falsity it self, and

* *Duke of* Marlborough.

down

down right Contradictions and Lies were the Favourites that perſwaded and brought them into every Meaſure they took. And indeed it is the undeniable Character of moſt *Britons* in this Age, that they firſt poſſeſs'd themſelves of imaginary and romantick Principles, and then proceeded to Actions as wild and extravagant as the Grounds whereon they were built; neglecting and deſpiſing all that was ſolidly true and glorious in it ſelf, every thing which would really make them eaſie and happy, and entertaining Error and Slavery in their Place. Hence it was, no doubt, that all the Parts of this Rebellion, tho' never ſo much labour'd and ſtudied, when they came to be put together and brought into Uſe, diſſolv'd and died away almoſt of themſelves. For the *Truth* was againſt theſe People, and their fantaſtick Opinions of the Power and Title of the Pretender, or of any better Title, or more Power, than the Laws of the Land conſent to and eſtabliſh, and their Chimeras of the ſame things (when not to be found in Scripture) being lodg'd as inviolably in the Clergy; and that therefore the whole Conſtitution ſacred and Civil was near expiring from the Prevalency of thoſe who didn't think exactly on theſe Subjects as they themſelves did; I ſay, when theſe Dreams of Opinion came to the Teſt, and Mens Hearts and Hands were to try on which Side the real Argument lay; all the Impoſture fail'd, and melted into a to-

tal Rendition of it ſelf to a ſtronger and honeſter Power; and Freedom from Tyranny both in Church and State, and a Proteſtant Succeſſor to obtain and preſerve theſe two great Ends, this bore down all, and for ever will continue to bear down all before it.

SECT. III.

The Danger of the Church, *the Grand Artifice and Party-Word of the Faction.*

IT is obſervable, that tho' the People were ready to give up their Liberty to the State, as well as their Conſciences to the Church, and that therefore both Church and State were moſt cunningly ſaid to be in Danger from thoſe Men, who ſet up for a Freedom from the Impoſitions of either: yet it was thought too impolitick to cry out publickly for the Danger of the latter, the Words *Liberty* and *Freedom* being ever ready to ſtop their Mouths who argued this Way; for which Reaſon the laſting Prevalent Cant-Word, whereby the whole Spirit of the Party was ſuſtain'd, and which to this Day isn't quite extinct, was *THE DANGER OF THE CHURCH:* An Expreſſion indefinite, and to which no one, real, determin'd Idea was ever yet fix'd; and which, thro' its Ambiguity and plauſible Sound, was wiſely calculated and as exactly anſwer'd the Deſigns of the firſt Inventors of it.

THE

The Falsity of this Affirmation, *The Church is in Danger*, has, in some Degree, already, and will more clearly appear in the Pursuit of this Discourse: For, if the utter abolishing of the Gospel in these Realms be meant by this Phrase, this I suppose is so glaring a Piece of Effrontery, so bald an Imposition that it carries its own Answer along with it; it being morally impossible that Atheism and Infidelity tho' much complain'd on, and not without some Reason, shou'd utterly usurp upon the Christian Faith, and bear down all Religion and Divine Worship before it. Not that I wou'd have my Readers ignorant that there wanted not some Men, designing and wicked enough to send the Expression abroad on this very Errand, nor others credulous and foolish enough to embrace and believe it. Whereas alas! this Complaint ever has, and ever will be the sad Fate of hapless Mankind in all Ages and Kingdoms of the Earth, till a little before the last Dissolution and the general Consummation of all Things: Till which Time Providence permits Things to go on in their natural Course; and the Power of Darkness and the Wickedness of Men, no doubt, till that Time (to speak in the Scripture-Phrase) * lets, and lets, and will lett.

'Twou'd be tedious, on this Head, to give but a small Sketch of this antient Outcry,

 since

* 2 *Thess.* ii. 7.

ſince any Oeconomy and Morality was pretended to amongſt Men. Let us look where we will, and at what Time we pleaſe, and we ſhall be furniſhed with Examples of this ſort: The Moraliſt as well as Divine, ever labouring to recommend Vertue and Religion, ever complaining of the Wickedneſs of their Times, and repreſenting from thence the Danger there was leſt the Worſhip of the Gods, leſt Juſtice and Honeſty amongſt Men ſhou'd take their laſt Flight, and be entirely ſwept away from the Face of the Earth: And indeed ſuch an Undertaking would be odious and ungrateful as well as needleſs; witneſs that wretched Collection of Sin and Wickedneſs, produc'd not long ſince to skreen a * Perſon impeach'd by the Commons of *England*, and found guilty by the Lords, of High Crimes and Miſdemeanours. A Collection! vile and horrid, and fit only to appear in that Light, wherein, by Voice of publick Authority it was afterwards order'd to be burn'd. However, tho I am unwilling to ſhew the Inſignificancy of this Plea, to the Purpoſes it was produc'd, by running thro' the Deformities and offenſive Parts of Hiſtory, yet I can't forbear remarking that in *Popiſh* Countries, the ſame Language, on the ſame Occaſion, and at the ſame Time was hotly and loudly made uſe on: The *Church of Rome*, and other *Popiſh* Churches being then complain'd of publickly by the Pope, *&c.* to be in Danger, not only from the Wick-

* *Dr. Sacheverel.*

Wickedness of the People, but from their Tendency to embrace new *Doctrines and Opinions.

And that Men may be fully perswaded that this Party-Phrase in *England*, was only artful and entirely false: I beg Leave to let them know, that during the whole Time that it was entertain'd with Credit and Affection, most wholsom and powerful Laws were in Force against all Manner of Immorality, Profaness and Vice; Religion and the establish'd Church were fenc'd impregnably, and secur'd by the strongest Barriers that the whole Legislature could provide for them. The present Prince was celebrated for Vertue and Protestantism; and the Crown firmly settled on a Reform'd Posterity. There was not one Attempt made either in publick or private to attack these Laws; no Motion in either House of Parliament, no Suspicion from the Queen, and indeed no Grounds of Suspicion from any other Quarter; unless from a few insignificant circumforaneous Scribblers; their Names known and of no Influence, but on some unregarded Libertine and licentious Youths, with which sort of Men, *London* and *England* not only, but all Countries of our Globe will for ever be infested. I cannot conclude this Subject without informing my Reader, that this Insinuation of these wicked Men was so groundless, that Religion

* *The Pope publish'd a Letter at this Time exhorting the Clergy to watch against* Socinianism, Jansenism, &c. *which he complain'd were very much encouraged in* France, Italy, and other *Popish Nations.*

gion at this Time really made a conſpicuous and ſhining Figure amongſt us. We were bleſs'd with a Set of learned, honeſt and pious Biſhops. The inferiour Clergy were numerous, orthodox, aud unmoleſted in their ſpiritual Exerciſes and Temporal Proviſions. The Churches were throng'd; the Altars frequented; and ſuch amiable Marks of publick Charity erected, countenanc'd and unmoleſted in almoſt every Town and City in the whole Kingdom, beſides the private Obſervances of this Duty, as is the peculiar Glory of *England*, and which by the Permiſſion of God, will, I hope, cover many of our melancholy National Sins.

SECT. IV.

The Falſity of the General Aſſertion of the Danger of the Church, *applied to the Church of* England, *in particular.*

WHAT has been ſaid of this fallacy of the Danger of the Church, as it regards the Goſpel of Chriſt and Religion in general, will illuſtrate the ſame Cheat, with reſpect to what is call'd the Church of *England*, in particular; that is, thoſe *Articles*, *Canons*, *Rubricks*, and *Directories*, &c. which the Laws of the Land eſtabliſh as the *Modus* of Faith and Worſhip to all who are inclin'd to believe and conform to 'em in the Kingdom of *England*. Now, that theſe were in no Danger, is plain, becauſe, the *Laws*, which give them *their National* Sanction, and from whence

alone

alone they derive the Authority of an *English* Compilement, for Decency and Order in the Publick Worſhip of God, and the good edifying of his People, were in full force and vigour on their Side, all this time, and not one Syllable ever mutter'd of any Danger that thoſe Laws would be Violated or Repeal'd. How then cou'd the Church be in Danger, when the Laws which had appointed that ſuch a Church ſhould firſt *Be*, and which ſupported It when in Being, were in no Danger themſelves? No Populace being either Inclinable or Able to over-power the Legiſlature, and to aboliſh theſe Things by Violence; and the Legiſlature being free from a Suſpicion of any ſuch Deſigns; nay, on the Contrary, both theſe being perfectly diſpos'd to favour this Church.

In vain therefore was this Out-cry rais'd (excepting the Advantage of a Temporary Impoſition on ſome weak and wicked People) whilſt every antient Law that favour'd the Church remain'd unattempted and quiet; had it not been ſo, the true Phraſe ought to have been not that the Church, but thoſe Laws which protected the Church were in Danger of being violated or repealed: For I ſhall plainly ſhew hereafter, that the Repealing a particular Law or two relating to Proteſtant Diſſenters wou'd have been, and ſtill will be for the Honour and Safety of the Church. But this they knew to be too plain an Untruth

truth to be receiv'd: Or, had there been a Pretence for it, no Phrase on this Side, could possibly have serv'd the Turn. No! The Word *Church* was what had been long and warmly beaten into the Minds of the People, and the unintelligible Averrment of the Danger of that, Cou'd only be sufficient and powerful enough to make Men run Mad, and to undo themselves and their Country upon unexamin'd Delusions and Vagaries---- and Mad undoubtedly they were, who cou'd not see, that, to make up this Proposition and constitute the Truth of it, *viz. The Church is in Danger*, the Laws which authoriz'd the Appointment of such a Church, and maintain'd it (both being now incorporate) must be in Danger also; *i. e.* The whole Legislature (the Prince particularly) must be in Danger; the Prince, who is Head, Protector and Governour of it; which Things most certainly, were not so.

But the Truth is, the People were not treated at so plain and explicite a rate, and a great Majority of the Multitude understood this Phrase in both the Senses now mention'd, being moreover with great Industry taught by the same Hands to lament that the Persons and Characters of the Clergy grew into Contempt and Disregard every Day: and that their Power and Authority was visibly lessening and expiring: And this compleated the Notion of the Church's Danger.

SECT. V.

The Danger of the Church consider'd, in respect to the Contempt of the Clergy.

IT would be a very notorious Falsity, to deny that this was the Case of a great many Clergymen at that Time: and would be as partial and unfair, in a Person enter'd thus far into this Subject, not to give the honestest and truest Account of this Matter, that Observation or Industry can make one Master of. To set this Affair in the clearest Light, I cannot forbear mentioning that the Kingdom of *England* at this Time, was perfectly divided into Two * Parties; One whereof espous'd the Succession of the House of *Hanover*: the Other the Interest of the pretended Son of King *James* the IId. The former, generally speaking, piqu'd themselves for moderate Principles in Church and State: The latter carry'd the Prerogative of the Crown to its greatest Altitude, and rigidly insisted on the Title of Our Prince, to be Hereditary and Lineal alone; maintaining at the same Time the strictest Superiority and Power in the Clergy, which cou'd be consistent with the Appearance of any Reformation from *Rome*.

It will be no Discovery to let you know, that a great Part of the Clergy did mighty Ser-

* Whigg *and* Tory.

vice to this last Set of Men, by advancing both from Press and Pulpit, that Sacredness of Inheritance which Birth convey'd to a Prince, and that unlimited Obedience which Scripture (as they wrongly imagin'd) without any Exceptions demanded of the Subject; very willingly making use of the present good Dispositions of the People towards their Order, in Hopes by this Means thoroughly to establish that absolute Authority and Power over the Laity, which (tho' so agreeable to themselves) many *English* Subjects oppos'd with utmost Industry and Vehemence. And although there wanted not many amongst the Priesthood, who were of the moderate Side, yet the far greatest Number of them acted a quite different Part, and, besides the political Notions, which I have mention'd, busied themselves very much in advancing Spiritual Doctrines of the same Tendency and Design.

Confession and Absolution sometimes made their Figure amongst Us in the same Shape wherein they appear in Popish Countries; the Nature of Schism was carry'd so far at another Time, that all Toleration was render'd ridiculous and useless, and then we know what * Opinion must have step'd into its Place. The Power of the Keys enjoy'd all its Terrors; and to remove the highest † Mountain which lay in the Way of our new Accommodation, the Sa-

* *Persecution.* † *Transubstantiation.*

crifice

crifice of the Sacrament, was to be the common Expreſſion in uſe amongſt Us; and thus Idolatry and Contradiction were to be loſt and ſwallow'd up in the Softneſs of Words, which wou'd have left Men at Liberty to fix what Idea they pleas'd unto them.

When this High-flown Part of the Clergy had thus array'd themſelves in all the gawdy and Party-colour'd Garbs of the Sanctuary, and had perſwaded the People of the Beauty and Uſefulneſs of them, 'twas then eaſy to find every particular Account, which the general Cry of *The Danger of the Church*, was contriv'd to produce, and to extract daily Advantages from it, amongſt the Vulgar. And indeed it came to that odious Paſs at laſt, that one cou'dn't mention the moſt indifferent Action (tho' never ſo juſtly) which disfavour'd a Clergyman, but ſtraitway you were bully'd by *The Danger of the Church*: And therefore you may eaſily gueſs how loud the Language was rais'd, againſt thoſe Perſons that dar'd at ſuch a Juncture as this, publickly to oppoſe the Doctrines now recited, or to reſent that barefac'd Trumpeting of Rebellion, and favouring the *Pretender*, which is too well known to have been frequently advanc'd and impreſs'd upon the People.

Whilſt Things were in this Condition, there were not wanting Numbers of Foreign Popiſh Prieſts, and other Emiſſaries from Abroad, who joyn'd with the Cry in Vogue, and by various *Artifices* helped on the Warm Part of the Cler-

gy to bustle in Vindication of their own and the decaying Cause of the Church, and egg'd the exasperated Multitude into Rage and Flame, to the same Purposes and Ends; till Things were carry'd to such an Height, that a Dormant Set of * Men, who imagin'd themselves the Chief Persons to be consider'd and employ'd, whenever the long wish'd-for Season offer'd itself, at once spake out, and thought it a Time not only to advance the Title of their † King to our Crown, but to prefer their own Title to the Priesthood, to any other in these Realms, nay to exclude all such Clergymen, whether Bishop, Priest or Deacon, from Holy Orders, as well as any Temporal Encouragements in the Church, who either took their Order, or receiv'd Benefices without that Lineal Descent of Priesthood, which was deriv'd from the Bishops, made in the Reign of King *James* the IId, (and upwards) which Ecclesiastical Tenure they affirm'd to be interrupted, from the Time that that King was depos'd for Mal-administration; and that therefore all that has been done this Way, since that Time, by other Hands, was and is Antichristian, and Null and Void in itself. An admirable Instance of Charity! to fasten the Hopes of Eternal Salvation on Circumstances never to be prov'd, and most certainly Heterodox and untrue. But we know whence this severe and infallible Spi-

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* *Nonjurors.* † *The* Pretender.

rit comes, and must safely conclude against this horrid Doctrine in Favour of the present Members of Our Church, not only, and those who shall come after us, but in Favour also of those Numberless Souls who have gone to the other World, content with the Consecration of those Bishops which King *William* (of glorious Memory) appointed, and with the Administration and Church-Offices of Presbyters ordain'd by them.

CHAP. III.

Treating more particularly of the pretended Reasons for the Cry of The Danger of the Church.

HAving explain'd these Things after that free and open Manner wherewith they ought to be handled, and I hope with unquestionable Disinterestedness and Integrity; I cannot dismiss this Argument, without taking more particular Notice of Two or Three of the most popular Reasons, which were given out to support the impertinent and vexatious Cry of *The Danger of the Church.*

SECT. I.

Answering the Objection that the Ministry then in Being, (from the Year 1708 to 10 especially,) and both Houses of Parliament, were known Favourers of Presbytery and a Common-Wealth.

ONE was that the Ministry then in Being, nay, both the Houses of Parliament, were known Favourers of Presbytery and a Common-Wealth, and that manifest Overt-Acts wou'd soon appear of a most dismal and wicked Nature; that Measures wou'd be soon made known, which had been prepar'd to reduce All *Great-Britain* to that Sort of Civil and Ecclesiastical Government, whenever the Nation came to be disengag'd from that monstrous Administration which then oppress'd it. And yet when this grand Change happen'd to be made, so little of those pompous Accusations were either pursu'd or prov'd, that it all ended in a false and impotent Attack on the greatest Hero, One of the most deserving * Men that ever supported or retriev'd the Honour of the *English* Nation. An Attack! so shameful, so infamous and unjust, that it ended in the Disgrace and Confusion of those who began it; but which contributes to fill up the Sum of those Glories that render this Great Person admirable and conspicuous, for the most eminent Pas-

* *The Duke of* Marlborough.

ſive as well as Active Vertues. He who was able to *Do* the nobleſt and beſt of Things for his Country, proving able to bear and ſuffer the worſt. But to return. It muſt be evident that thoſe Clamours againſt theſe Men were invidious and falſe, not only becauſe nothing like the Crimes laid againſt them was ever produced or appear'd (tho' by the by, the moſt flagrant * Villanies have been made good againſt their Accuſors) but becauſe there is not Room even for Suſpicion now of the Danger of the ſame Things, tho' moſt of the ſame Men (and Men of their Principles) by the good Providence of God, and Wiſdom of His preſent Majeſty, are repoſted in their former, or in other Places of publick Employment and Truſt; nay one may venture to affirm, that the Church of *England* never yet gloried in truer or ABler Friends than King GEORGE and His Miniſters; nor ever enjoy'd more ſettled Peace and Security, or a more beautiful and pleaſing Proſpect of continuing in the ſame happy State, than now it does. The Members of it may quarrel, and the Clergy belonging to it may go on to wrangle and diſpute; but whilſt this Royal Family is the Head and Protectors of it, the Foundation thereof will remain ſtedfaſt and ſure; and all the ill-contriv'd Superſtructure rais'd thereon, by deluded and impoſing Per-

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* *Witneſs the late Impeachments, Fines, Priſons, Baniſhments, nay, Sufferings to Death, which have been the juſt Fate of ſome of them and their Friends.*

ſons,

ſons, will tumble and mouldér into Silence and Oblivion.

'Twill be concluſive in this Diſpute, I hope, to obſerve that neither common Senſe or Prudence cou'd poſſibly dictate to Miniſters in full Poſſeſſion of all the Power, Riches and Honour of a Kingdom, to attempt ſuch Fundamental Changes, as muſt endanger, or entirely ruin both themſelves and their Fortunes. This we know has, and may be the Endeavour and Study of Perſons out of Place; but the Poſſeſſors ſurely have nothing to do but to maintain themſelves, and all Publick Affairs, in the preſent quiet and proſperous Condition, and to diſcharge their Duties ſo wiſely and carefully as never to be call'din queſtion about them.

That nothing laſtly may be left unſaid on this Head, it is evident from the Liſt of Both the Houſes of that Parliament, that there were not Ten Diſſenting Members in them, (except *Scots)* nor above One or Two Common-Wealth's Men, (if any) in the literal Acceptation of that Word. There was indeed a Repreſentation offer'd to the Queen, in Purſuance of the Humour of the Times, by The *Lower-Houſe of Convocation* then ſitting, ſetting forth the dangerous State of Sin and Wickedneſs which infeſted the Nation; I ſhall ſay no more here of that Repreſentation, than deſire my Readers to peruſe it, and then they will be able to judge of the Reaſonableneſs of it, and whether any thing *that is here ſaid*, be an Anſwer unto it.

SECT.

SECT. II.

Farther Arguments answer'd for The Danger of the Church, *viz. Repealing some Laws and not Enacting others for its Security.*

ANother Reason given for *The Danger of the Church*, was that some Laws which might become its Boundaries and Defence were not enacted, and that others which favour'd it, were propos'd to be repeal'd, a Flood-Gate thereby being laid open to Dissenters of all Sorts, to rush in and overwhelm it.

Now in order to discover the Fallacy of this Assertion, and to shew that Party-Cause (not Truth) lay at the Bottom of these Argumentations, it will be a Thing of too narrow a Compass, to fall directly upon the particular Views which those Men had who argu'd this Way; and therefore I beg Leave to commence this Affair from an higher Principle, and to lay it down at first for a general Truth, that whenever the Publick Safety of a State comes to be in Danger, the Difference of Religious Principles in the several Subjects of that State, at such a Juncture, ought not, will not be consider'd, unless those Principles are the very Occasion of that Danger, or wou'd produce a greater Evil than Good, in regard to the present Circumstance of Things; but that All Hands will be called in for the common Safety, whatever Diversities of Sentiments may possess the Minds of Men, in that State, about Reli-

gion and the Worſhip of God. For, from the Beginning of the World, Men never enter'd into Societies, or form'd themſelves into Kingdoms and Governments, becauſe of a Conſent and Harmony in Principles of Religion; but when they became Civil Societies, betook themſelves to eſtabliſh the beſt religious Principles which they cou'd diſcover or find out. And this is ſo true, that you ſhall always find, that where Mens Intereſts are the ſame, they will never break thro' thoſe for Difference in Religion: And, tho' their Religion be the ſame, yet it is no Bond of Union, where their Intereſts are divided.

It is here ſuppos'd that it is impoſſible, that All the Inhabitants of any Nation, where Liberty of Reaſoning and the Benefit of common Senſe is left in their Power, can pretend to think the ſame Way in Matters of Religion, or indeed almoſt in any thing elſe: Mens Underſtandings and Education being ſo wide and diſtant one from another, that they wou'd diſpute, were it poſſible, even about the plaineſt Things; as I ſay, it is not to be conceiv'd (under the preſent Frame and Make of Humane Minds) that ever God Almighty deſign'd, that, in ſuch and ſuch Tracts of Land, all the People dwelling therein ſhould exactly be of the ſame Opinions about his Worſhip and the Affairs of another Life, I am ſure Men never were, no not during the very Delivery of Re*velation*: And as it is impoſſible to aſſign any *ſuch Infallibility*, or to conclude any other-

ways than that we are left to ourselves to form the best Judgment we can, of the Religion of our own and other Kingdoms round about Us; so certainly it is against all Reason (and Revelation) for any Leaders or Governours in any Part of the Earth, to force Men to conform to their Moduses of believing and practising, and to deprive them of the common Benefit of that Country, if they refuse so to do: And much more so, if they go farther, and punish them for not so doing. 'Tis irrational, 'tis cruel that there shou'd be any such Kingdom: Nay, 'tis impossible ever to find One which really succeeds in such a Scheme, notwithstanding the dire Efforts that are made towards it in some Neighbouring Nations, and the horrid Persecutions in use for this End. This being premis'd, that no Men should be oblig'd to think like the rest of their Countrymen, nor be punish'd or excluded the Benefits of their Country, if they did not, provided those Thoughts did not produce Acts which tended to the Subversion of the Establishment of that Country; Our present Question comes into this short Compass, whether the Opinions of Protestant Dissenters be destructive of the Constitution of the Kingdom of *England?* For these were the Men from whom the Church was said to be in Danger, and in regard to whom, the Complaint about Repealing and not Enacting, Laws, was made. And when this Question is answer'd, we may then go farther and determine whether Laws shou'd be made or repeal'd which disfavour'd them, and ren-

der them incapable of the common Emoluments of the Nation? For 'tis plain that Opinion in Religion alone, lays their present Incapacity upon them. Whether they shou'd be subject to a Penalty for the external Exercise of those Dissenting Principles in Publick Worship? And whether in time of common Danger, they ought to be entrusted and admitted on a Level with others of His Majesty's loyal Subjects? All these Questions and some more of the same Nature, depend on the Solution of the first, *viz.* whether our Protestant Dissenters hold Opinions destructive of our Constitution? The Question is not whether a Rigid Presbyterian, (suppose) who reckons Episcopacy to be a damnable Sin, wou'd, if he were able, abolish that Order, and establish the Presbyterian in its Room? or, whether a Common-wealth's Man, who is so prejudic'd against Monarchy, as to think it an ungodly Usurpation of One Man over Thousands, wou'd dethrone a King and place the Government in the Hands of a few or many: Such Men there may be, tho' their Number be but small; for I am sure that the Protestant Presbyterian Churches, and Common-Wealths Abroad, pay mighty Deference to our Church and State, and entertain no such Damning Principles concerning either our Ecclesiastical or Civil Government: But the Question is, whether our present Protestant Dissenters, tolerated here by that general Name, embrace Principles, destructive of our Constitution? *For if they* do, no doubt they'll put them

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in Practice whenever they are able; and if they don't, then, whether they are *capable* of being trusted in any Share of the Administration of Civil and Military Affairs; and especially whether they ought to be call'd in to succour and support the whole Constitution at a Time of common Peril and Danger? To avoid being misunderstood in a Place which will be thought to consist of some Tenderness and Nicety, I desire the Reader to remember that I here oppose the Protestant Dissenters to Papists, the latter of which most certainly hold Opinions destructive of our Constitution. I think this Admonition necessary, because People are generally at a Loss on this Subject, for want of distinguishing clearly between our Constitution, and the Laws and Usages of the Land, which are but the Consequence of that Constitution: The Constitution being the Cause, the Laws the Effect; and because the wicked Designs of the Men of those Times which I am speaking of, were very much favour'd by dispersing this artful and invidious Question, whether 'twere better for a Person of the Church of *England*, to become a Papist or a Presbyterian? Insinuating that the former were the most preferable Choice. The Constitution I take to be explain'd in this One Proposition, that all our Laws are to be made by a mix'd Legislature, by King, Lords and Commons; this is the constituted Government of *England*, and whatever Laws these enact and agree on together, *must* be submitted to as the legal Result of

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our Conſtitution. I cannot but think (as I have ſaid before) that the Proteſtant Diſſenters, to a very inconſiderable Number, are vigorous Friends to this Conſtitution, altho' they may wiſh that the Powers conſtituted, wou'd repeal ſome Laws which they are diſpleas'd with, or enact others which wou'd be more agreeable to them; But of theſe, neither they or any Subject are Judges: The Legiſlators alone, have the Power of doing any thing this Way. For my Part, I think our Conſtitution a glorious One, and the Laws built upon it very reaſonable and uſeful. Whatever the Legiſlators enact, I will obey for Conſcience ſake; knowing this to be certainly true, that all Humane Affairs ſo fluctuate and change, that there never will be either a Conſtitution, or any Laws devis'd under its Influence, ſo perfect in themſelves, or ſo adapted to the Genius and Taſte of any One Period of Time, as to be ſecure from Diſlike or Abuſe. This being premis'd, I hope it may at length be roundly affirm'd, that our Proteſtant Diſſenters hold no Opinions deſtructive of, or tending to undo our Conſtitution. Whereas Papiſts hold and believe every thing that ruines and deſtroys it; nay, hold the Neceſſity of Aboliſhing moſt or all of our Laws, Sacred and Civil, which derive their Sanction from that Conſtitution. They own themſelves oblig'd to obey an Hereditary Arbitrary Prince, even tho' he ſhou'd confound all *our Eſtabliſhment*, Laws, Liberties, and Religion; and they hold the Opinion of a Foreign

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Power's having Authority over our Nation, our King, Laws and People not only, but that he is infallible and can forgive Sins, and therefore they esteem themselves obliged to be ready, whenever he sends them Command, (by Murder, Fire, Sword and War, or by Methods never so inhumane and wicked, to alter or destroy our Constitution, and our Laws Religious and Temporal; and to model them and the Nation according to his sole Direction and Will. A Tryal of which, in One Instance, is now set on Foot in *France* *. To conclude, I don't know any One Man in *England*, who wou'dn't alter many Laws in Being, were it in his Power, tho' he may like the Constitution very well, and tho' he prays that no other may ever obtain. The Protestant Dissenters I believe cou'd name a great many of this Sort, the most essential of which, I hope, and am (humanly speaking) sure never will be alter'd; but a Papist wou'd tear up some particular Things, not only, but the whole Foundation of All that is Protestant, *English*, and Free. To come then to the Point in Hand; for my Part, considering the Protestant Dissenters as a Body of Men, in this Kingdom, by all the Observations that I cou'd ever make of them, the previous Question, ought to be given in the Negative; for from the late happy Revolution (in

* The Pope's Bull Unigenitus; *destructive of the Liberties of the* Gallican *Church: nobly oppos'd by* many Prelates and Inferiour *Clergy*. God encrease this Spirit.

1688)

1688) to this very Day, I find them ever sideing with, and abetting the present Constitution whenever it thus came to be attack'd by the common Enemy; and claiming only an Allowance and Toleration under that Constitution as a peaceable People, differing in some Particulars of Church-Government, but content to enjoy those Opinions, and serve God according to them in Quietness, and Ease; without Let to themselves, or Molestation to others. This I take to be the Case of our Protestant Dissenters in General, whatever warm or virulent Expressions some particular Men amongst them have made use on, against the *English* Establishment of Church and State; and as I assure them I am no Friend to their Separation, but think they ought immediately to come in and communicate with us, so I wou'd have all the rest of Mankind know, that I have no Interest or Design to serve, in doing them Justice, by speaking thus farely about them in every thing else: For I own that I cou'd never see them designing or desirous to take or grasp the whole Government into their own Hands, and I am sure they are not able to sustain it, were it put into their Power. Nay, I am farther very well persuaded, that were they not exasperated, and made more considerable by Opposition than really they are in themselves, (like a Torrent that is damm'd up, which otherways wou'd run in its Natural Course, without Impetuosity *or Noise,*) I am sure wou'd our establish'd Clergy *and* other Conformists, either use an intire

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Silence towards them, or elſe treat them with kind Invitations and tender Expoſtulations, &c. wou'd they but leave them perfectly to their own Reaſonings, we ſhou'd ſee that they cou'd not ſupport themſelves for ever, on the bare Strength of their own Cauſe, no! they'd dwindle at laſt into leſſer and leſſer Numbers, till the very Name of a Diſſenter were quite loſt in a long Tract of Time. Experience allows this to be a known Truth, ſince the Repeal of ſome Penal Laws made againſt them; and Reaſon conſents ſtrongly to the Confirmation of it. For 'tis certain that Contradiction and hard Uſage, give Life and Nerves to many Sentiments, which otherways wou'd either lie dormant, or elſe entirely die away. There is a great deal in being thought Somebody: Obſtinacy is ever uppermoſt in an Argument, and Men will never engage with you, or be brought to hear you with any kind Diſpoſition, when they are ſure before-hand to be branded either for Fools or Knaves. Complaiſance and good Nature, may win and induce them to enter the Liſts, but Railing, Satyriſing, nay, * Damning, will never either perſwade them to come over at firſt, or continue them in your Opinion afterwards; and I wiſh with all my Soul, that every Diſſenter in the Kingdom, were appriz'd that no One Pulpit wou'd

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* *Dr.* Sacheverell's *Sermon (amongſt the reſt) on the 5th of* November.

ever hereafter be employ'd (as hitherto many have been) against them; but that Christ, and him Crucified, *i. e.* some practical Discourses, shou'd only be deliver'd to the People; and if they or their Cause happen'd to be mention'd, it shou'd be in the Language of Good Nature and Invitation alone, to attend an unblameable Service, and to hear a charitable brotherly Discourse. Certain I am, that such a Compromise, is Christian and Honourable, and that such a Centre of Union as this, is the only one that can be of any present Use; till God, out of his infinite Mercy, by some extraordinary Means, makes us of one Faith and one Worship; which I earnestly pray may be our Fate here in these Kingdoms, long before the End and Consummation of all Things.

SECT. III.

A Secondary Question about Dissenters.

AS to the latter Questions, Whether when the Church of *England* flourishes, under all its Proprieties and Particularities; and the Civil State is free from any Apprehension of being disturb'd or overturn'd, Men, who will not in every Particular, conform to the first, shou'd too indulgently be brought in to share the Honours and Emoluments of the latter, whilst others may be found who are more capable of such Employments, by giving a total Poof of their sincere Conformity to all the present Laws whatever in Being?

It is plain from Reaſon and Nature, and I am ſure there is nothing reveal'd to the contrary, that no Body ought to be laid under a legal Incapacity of filling Offices of Truſt in the Kingdom, where they were born and bred, becauſe they differ from ſome eſtabliſhed Notions of Religion in that Country. Opinions of Religion in themſelves, having nothing to do with Affairs of State, and Things of a Civil Nature. And this is ſo true, that where Religion and Intereſt don't go together, they will never ſee any Conteſt of this ſort: Take away the Salaries and Revenues annex'd to theſe Places, and your Higheſt-Churchmen and Excluders of others, will let the State run its Riſque, and permit Diſſenters, *Turk* or *Jew*, or any Body elſe to labour at the Publick Offices and Poſts of the Nation. What I advance as true from Nature, Reaſon and common Juſtice, has ever been true, in Fact; but it being a tedious Task to go thro' the Examples of almoſt all Nations, and to lay before you their Practice in this Matter; I refer my Reader to a Book, written induſtriouſly on this Subject, wherein what I advance is demonſtrated to the meaneſt Underſtanding beyond the Power of Contradiction *. However that I may not part with this Queſtion too eaſily, let us bring the Caſe

* The Diſſenter's Claim of Right to a Capacity for Civil Offices. *Printed for* Eman. Matthews, *at the Bible in* Paternoſter-Row. 1717.

Home to our own Persons; let us suppose our selves born Protestants in *France*, and as much *Frenchmen* in Interest, Fortune, *&c.* as one who never removed Ten Miles from *Lyons* or *Blois*. Upon this Supposition we are to be very fond of the *French* Constitution, are honest Men likewise, and personally fitted for many Places of publick Trust in that Kingdom; we live quietly and are Loyal, pay our Taxes, pray for the King, and fight against every Nation which are Enemies to *France*. Would it not be hard that we, or any such-like Men should be excluded from serving their Country, purely because we don't believe Transubstantiation, or can't in Conscience admit of the Pope's Constitution *Unigenitus*? I can't see that any Man can answer in the Negative. And this is the exact Case of Protestant Dissenters here; only with this Difference, that the Advantage of the Similitude is on their Side; for they don't differ so widely from the Establish'd Church of *England*, as the *Hugonots* do from that of *France*. If the Objection recurs here, that such Persons, by being admitted into these Places, will in time grow upon us, and at last endanger our Church Government, and some other publick Establishment which they don't like. To this I have answer'd already, that, by what Reasoning and Observation I am able to make use of, I cannot find that the Protestant Dissenters wou'd desire an Alteration in our Constitution, *i. e.* wou'd desire to be govern'd by any other Form than King, Lords, and Commons; but that they

they ſhould wiſh that this Power wou'd enact ſome new, and repeal ſome old Laws for their ſake; this is no Wonder if they imagine either one or the other wou'd tend to their Advantage. Now, as it is not to be believ'd that it will ever be in their Power, were it in their Will to alter the whole Legiſlature, ſo neither is there any Glimpſe or Appearance of there ever being ſuch Perſons employ'd in the Legiſlature, who will open the Gap ſo wide, as to let Diſſenters into ſuch Countenance and Power, as to endanger any of the preſent Laws which ſupport our Eſtabliſhment.

No one will affirm that our Laws, in regard to theſe Things, are entirely perfect and compleat; nay, 'tis without queſtion that many Things will bear an Alteration, and that it were better to omit and abrogate many others. But theſe Things muſt be left to the Wiſdom of the Nation. In the mean Time we may fully conclude, that all Things are ſafe and ſtable; and that Monarchy and Epiſcopacy will ſtill continue in their flouriſhing Condition amongſt us, altho' ſome circumſtantial Alterations were made in any thing elſe.

But, ſuppoſing this Objection cou'd poſſibly take Place, and Diſſenters ſhou'd make the imagin'd uſe of the Liberty contended for; Is there not a whole Legiſlature ready to animadvert upon them? For I ſuppoſe theſe Attacks to be gradual, like other Affairs of the ſame Nature. Can't the Prince in being diſplace the Heads of ſuch a Faction, and won't he, ſince otherwiſe he is to

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fall with them? Is it not in the Power of the Clergy or Judges to Remonstrate; nay, will not the Multitudes, *i. e.* Societies and Corporations, Petition to have these Men remov'd? Upon the whole, thus the Case stands. Reason pleads their Capacity to serve their Country; and Contingencies, Things of a casual Nature, and which may never happen, and which will only hurt themselves whenever they attempt them; these are the only Objections produc'd to the contrary.

It may not be improper on this Subject, to intimate, that it is too great an Affront put on the Executive Power in *England*, (as well as contradictory to the genetral Liberty of the Subjects of these Nations) not to suffer them to make Choice of Persons who are to execute under them. If the King for the Time being is entrusted with the Executive Part of the Laws, it is at his Ministers always, at his own Peril frequently, if they be not executed according to Law. Contradictory therefore is it to give him this Extensive Power first, and to make him accountable on extraordinary Occasions for it; nay, to give him an Oath at his Coronation for the due and legal Peformance of it, and yet to prescribe to him by Law, what sort of Men he shall or shall not employ, in the Executive Office; and you may as well prescribe black or fair, as tie him down to those who think this Way or that in holy *Things, to* point out Men who go to a Church *or a Meeting.* 'Tis without dispute, that eve-

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ry Prince in every Nation, will choose Men of his own Complexion, and suited to his Inclinations and Interests; and I can't but say, that I shou'd prefer a Churchman (equally qualified) to a Dissenter, did I hold the Reins in an *English* Ministry. But this has nothing to do with the Argument; and as we are safe from Popish Kings, so we are (I hope) from Ministers of State, who favour that Interest; and therefore I am sure it is no Compliment to our present wise, vertuous and Protestant Monarch to put it out of his Power to employ whom he pleases for the Good of the Publick, especially on Pretence of Religious Principles, since we are sure he won't employ any Papist.

Having now, as I think, remov'd the Incapacity from a Dissenter, and left a Protestant Prince at Liberty to dispense the Favours of the Crown to Persons most able and willing to serve the Publick, whatever their Opinions be about external Communion, *&c.* in Religion; I come to the last Question of all, Whether Protestant Dissenters shou'd be employ'd in Time of common Danger? I own, I wonder it shou'd be a Question, or else not decided for 'em at first Appearance of it; that being to ask a Man whether he shou'd suffer another to help and save him or not? But so stupid, not long since (to say no worse of it) have been many *British* Subjects, as to give it against themselves; some Men chusing rather to venture the worst Consequences of the Pretender's Invasion, than remove an Incapacity which

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the Protestant Dissenters lay under, whereby their Force wou'd have been added to the honest Part of the Conforming Churchmen, in order to defeat all the Attempts of the Impostor. Men! who, when the Question was, Whether they wou'd arm a Third Power in defence of their Lives and Liberties, to defeat a Second which made its most vigorous Attacks upon them? Men! having liv'd in our Days, who decided in their own disfavour.

SECT. IV.

Answering the last Argument for the Danger of the Church; the Encouragement of Latitudinarians, *&c.*

A Third Reason spread amongst the People to support and account for the publick Voice of the *Church's Danger* (which has been partly spoken to already in the Treatment of the First) was, That the Ministers of State at that Time*, countenanc'd all sorts of Libertines in Opinion, even † *Free-Thinkers* and *Atheists*, *&c.* and that this Set of Men publickly avowing their Cause, and declaring themselves of their Principles and Party, gave a great Stroke towards the Downfall of Religion and the Church. I have already mention'd the mighty Boast that was made of this Part of the Argument; which, how insignificant soever it be in

* Whig-Ministers *for the first six Years of Queen* Anne's *Reign.*

† *A Word of an honest and valuable Signification, but in use to denote Infidelity,* &c.

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it self, and false in Fact; yet I cannot but think it worth while to give some account of it in this Place.

As it is natural for all Men to endeavour to become easy and pleas'd, so it is as natural to attach themselves, and to fall in with the Regulations and Measures of those Persons who are likeliest to please them, and make them easy, and who go upon Schemes, either exactly parallel, or else in a great measure proportion'd and agreeable to such as they propose to prosecute in the Conduct of their own Lives. The two * Parties in *England*, which I have mentioned before, did not entirely divide the whole Number of *Englishmen*, for there were several Subdivisions and Sects of Men, who distinctly listed themselves into the general Service of *Whig* and *Tory*, as they found their own particular Sentiments to approach nigh, or meet Favour and Countenance from either of these Principles.

Thus Liberty, Toleration, and such-like Words, being what the *Low-Party*, or *Whigs* of the Church of *England* set up for; all *Protestant Dissenters*, nay, *Latitudinarians* in all Kinds, and every Person who advanc'd Freedom of Thought, and that Dominion which Men ought to have over their own Faith and Consciences, these Men piqu'd themselves as Friends to the *Whigs*, and assum'd that *Appellation* as

* *Whig and* Tory.

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their Due, tho' (in its full and genuine Acceptation) they had no more Claim to it, than the Shadow has to be the Sun, becauſe it follows it, and has a very imperfect Relation unto it.

The *High-Party* of the Church of *England* or *Tories*, on the other Hand advancing the Power of the Church and the Prince to an unwarrantable, illegal Degree, were lov'd and favour'd by too many of the Rigid Clergy, (*Nonjurors* eſpecially) by *Jacobites*, *Papiſts*, and every Friend of Slavery and *Rome*. Now, for Explication-ſake, putting the Caſe that the Words *Whig* and *Tory* make up the full Idea of the two principal contending Parties in *England*, and that they differ only in regard to the high or low Terms and Circumſtances relating to the Power and Title of the Church and Kings of *England*, then the Queſtion is, (ſince there are many other Parties and Sects of Men in theſe Realms, higher or lower in reſpect of theſe two) of which Extreme we have been, are, or may be in danger? *viz.* from *Proteſtant Diſſenters*, *Republicans*, and *Latitudinarians*, &c. or from *Papiſts*, *Jacobites*, and all the Advancers of abſolute unlimited Authority, on a lineal unalienable Right of Succeſſion both in Church and State? The late Rebellion, I think, has determin'd this Queſtion ſufficiently; and I am ſure, good Reaſon and honeſt Obſervation cannot fail to do it.

The Abettors of *Popery*, *Tyranny* and *Jacobitiſm* claim their Right, from the Conſtitution of *England*, and the common Right of Kings by the *Laws* of Nature and Nations; nay, they

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blaſpheme and go farther, and call for it from the Law of God. A Claim ſtrong enough indeed! This Cauſe is carried on by a Majority (I am ſorry to ſay it) of two Thirds through this Nation: It has all the Efforts of united *Popery* to ſuſtain it from Abroad, and many *Proteſtants* (to their Shame be it ſpoken) at Home. It has been ſtruggled for theſe two Hundred Years, and in its Defence Commotions and Rebellions have been rais'd; Sword and Devaſtation have ravag'd and clear'd its Way; and Plotting, Aſſaſſination, Murder, have been in uſe, in common uſe, to encourage and maintain it.

On the other ſide, Anarchy, Republicaniſm, Diſſenting, Levelling, Libertiniſm, *&c.* pretend by no Claim to be inſtituted here; I know of no Attempt in the Memory of this Generation to overturn the preſent Eſtabliſhment, and to introduce theſe Things in its Place. I am ſure, were there ſuch a Deſign now broaching, and never ſo well laid, the Subjects of *England* who are this Way diſpos'd, are ſo very few and inconſiderable in reſpect of their Adverſaries, that they might as well endeavour to tranſplant the Gardens of *Verſailles* to the Hundreds of *Eſſex*; and I hope (and do not doubt but) this will be their Caſe to endleſs Ages; and, laſtly, that any foreign Power is either able or diſpos'd to contribute to ſuch a Work, or has, or will be, I dare ſay there is no one Man upon Earth has Face enough to affirm. No ſuch Aſſiſtance was given when Anarchy was once ſuc-

cessful for a while, and it is evident by the Transactions of those *Times, how unfit, and unable the Men I am now speaking of, are to govern the Kingdom by their own Power, or Principles; nay, let us but consider the Number, Interest, Power, and Education of the present Royal-Family, let us behold the deep Root that our Legal Constitution has taken for many Years together, and we shall find this Scheme to be scandalous and false; to be as chimerical as to make the tenderest Eastern Plant grow in the barrenest Part of the *Highlands* of *Scotland*.

But! no Matter. The Turn was to be serv'd, nothing cou'd do it but the suppos'd Danger of the Church, and nothing cou'd put the Church in Danger, but the groundless Suspicion of the Attempts of some Men, who thought they gain'd a mighty Point in being only tolerated; and of a few others, who, when they had flanted with a little Wit and Impiety, were in no Pain whether this or any other Scheme succeeded or not; whereas the constant Outcry against Dissenters, and the hard Struggles to dispirit, oppress and disarm them, and every Man that cried out for Liberty and Protestantism, was carried on for a quite different Reason from this which was pretended, *viz.* that they might not be able to assist the *Whigs* when the last Push shou'd be given in favour of the Pretender; to which only

* *The Rebellion under* Oliver Cromwell.

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End every thing pointed, and was calculated; a Peace made * that was the Scandal and Ruin of of the Nation; the Army either disbanded, or reform'd to the Inclinations of the very Pretender; the Fleet laid up; the publick Stores of War exhausted; in short, every thing but Providence dispos'd to bring the *Impostor* quietly in upon us. When I have added one thing more, I will have done with this Subject; which is, That our present Pretender, and all our most immediate Lineal and Hereditary Princes being *Papists*, our real Danger must ever come from them and their Friends; and therefore whilst common Sence is left amongst Men, we ought to conclude, that the setting some Papist on our Throne, is the only Design these People can entertain; and that (for certain) they will make use of Ten Thousand Artifices and Falsities, and every thing else which can contribute to bring this desirable Thing to pass.

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* *As* Utrecht.

CHAP. IV.

Containing a true Account of the English CONSTITUTION.

HAving taken so much Pains to shew the Fallacy of our Enemies, and the Injuries they have forc'd on the greatest Part of the Nation, by abusing Things (of highest Excellence in their own Nature) to the worst of Purposes, *i. e.* by imposing first their own erroneous Models of a Church and State upon *English* Subjects, as the genuine Constitution of their Country, and then by alarming the Nation with the Danger of them; altho' in Truth these Systems had nothing that is *English* in them; and those, which truly were so, were in Danger only from themselves: I hope it won't now be thought unworthy of the Reader's Care and Time, to have a Specimen laid before him of our real Constitution, that he may the better see the true Nature of these Impostor-Principles which were design'd to be put upon us in its stead; and that the ill Consequences of them may appear, which had been intended, and which were, in a great Measure, brought into Practice.

SECT.

SECT. I.

Our Duty to GOD *and the* KING *unembarass'd and plain.*

WE have of late Years been infinitely perplex'd and disturb'd by Disputes and Quarrels about these Matters; and the Reason is, because the only Things requir'd to a right understanding of them, were never applied to and made use of, *viz.* The removing Prejudices, laying aside Interest and Passion, &c. and having recourse to nothing but Honesty and Common Sense in the Disquisition of them; for, I cannot think that the publick Tenure and State of Things here, are, in themselves, so melancholy and unfortunate as not to be intelligible, altho' they are become the necessary Objects of our daily Consideration and Practice.

We may raise Doubts and Scruples, and dispute upon them as long as we please, in Matters of Faith and Religious Duty, but nothing is surer than that the Christian Road to Heaven and Happiness is most plainly mark'd out to every Man of common Sense and Reasoning, and that the Embarrassments and Stops which are met with, are all of our own creating; for, the whole Will of God concerning our Salvation, without any doubt, is legibly to be seen and met with in the written Word, which he has communicated to us; *wherein, if* we find our selves engag'd, in Passages

ſages ſometimes hard to be underſtood, or entirely abſtruſe and hidden from us, we can in Reaſon conclude nothing but that they are not deſign'd for our particular Uſe, and that it is not our Duty to rack our Imagination, or torment our Conſcience about them.

Thus alſo in regard to the Laws, and Civil State of *England*, we may write and read till we are weary; honeſt Men may diſtract themſelves, and Knaves may diſtract others, with needleſs Quarrels and long-ſpun Arguments; but 'tis plain that *Liberty* and *Proteſtantiſm* are the Foundation of our Conſtitution and Government; and therefore, all that an *Engliſhman* has to do on this Subject is, to remember that he ought to encourage and defend whatever ſtrengthens and ſupports theſe two Affairs, and to diſcourage and deſtroy whatever tends to deface or aboliſh them; notwithſtanding any pretended Principle, Uſage or Right to the contrary. Here's the *Criterion*; and if we apply to this about Mens Ways and Actions, Hypocriſy will no longer be a Defence for any of our various Enemies; and plain Sence, upon any particular Examination, will tell us, ſuch a manner of Dealing can't poſſibly favour either *Liberty* or *Proteſtantiſm*, and therefore this Man is no Friend to our *Engliſh* Conſtitution.

SECT. II.

The Original of Government in general.

TO begin. The Happiness and rational Liberty of Mankind being the Original Intention of that kind Creator who made us, and gave us our Being, it cannot be imagin'd that He design'd any Institution to take place which interfer'd with these Things, or infring'd in the least on the glorious Nature and Priviledge of them; nor can there be a greater Wonder than that Men should be found, who cou'd contrive or consent to any Methods of Life, Religious or Civil, which ungenerously betray and give up these Native Blessings.

Amidst the many different Forms of Civil Government, as well as Religious Societies in the various Kingdoms of the Earth, those of *England* justly challenge the nearest Accession to this *original rational Liberty*, which God and Nature have most strongly imprinted in human Minds, as their unalienable Property and Inheritance; which tho' it be every Man's own, yet being naturally pointed out to him as fit to be transferred in Trust to some Community which shou'd determine and settle Circumstances relating to it, and wherein this particular Right shou'd be preserv'd and seen, in a general Spirit, and publick Oeconomy and Disposition of Things, as the most certain Way to preserve it secure and easy; it is a greater Wonder still, that, where the *securest* and *easiest* Way is demonstrably

discover'd and establish'd, Men nevertheless can *there* be found so fickle, so deluded and wicked, as to embarrass themselves and their Neighbours with Attempts in Favour of any other; and this is notoriously the Fate of injur'd *England*; The restless Spirit of a bigotted and infatuated Party still-struggling to reduce, both to a Religious and Civil Slavery, that general, original, rational Liberty of Mankind, which is visibly preserv'd to every particular Native of these Lands: preserv'd in a Body of the wholsomest Laws, made by their own Consent; wherein (like *Plato*'s Ideas) the *Genius* of Liberty is beheld abstracted from that Portion of it, which every single Subject possesses towards constituting the whole: and, preserv'd in the Settlement of a National Church on the Foundation of the Bible of Jesus Christ, that Birth-right of every individual Believer; notwithstanding that the latter is most wickedly engross'd by a particular Set of Men in the Church of *Rome*; and notwithstanding the Disgrace that too many Sons of the Church of *England* put upon their innocent Mother, by falsly straining a great Number of her Doctrines to that monstrous Height and unchristian Length, which we daily (in Appearance) declaim against, in *Her*, who is the Abomination of all the Christian Earth: Judaising thus on Christianity: bringing Popery into *England*.

There is no Controversy so idle and endless, as that about the Original of Government. *They* who hold one only sort, and

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that of Divine Appointment and Institution, commencing from the First Man; and who wou'd continue the same absolute and unalienable to one Man, in one Family, an impossible and senseless *Resvery*! paramount and exclusive of governing in any other Way; He, to be born a Lord and King, and the rest of Mankind Subjects, nay Slaves; this has been long since justly exploded with Indignation and Contempt, being a thing plainly false in Fact, and ridiculous, nay monstrous in it self; for it is as plain as any mathematical Proposition, that mere accidental Circumstances and Things unforeseen, unthought on, and the different Exigencies of Time, have given Birth to the Institutions of the several Kingdoms and Principalities of the Earth; every Form whereof, no doubt, is as Divine as any other; Government in general being the Will and Design of God and Nature, but which, amidst an universal Fluctuation of human Affairs can't alone claim a settled and unalterable Uniformity; no! the contrary has ever been in use. When God chose, it was one Man indeed, but that Choice confounds our Defenders of Unlimited Power and Unalienable Right; for his first King, and all this King's Successors were limited * 400 Years before that first was crown'd; and their † personal Qualifications seem to be the only Reasons of their being chosen at last. And as to

* *Deut.* 17. 16. † 1 *Sam.* 9. 2, &c.

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the Acquirement of the Power of Governing in other Nations (besides the *Jews*) I have shewn that, uncertainly and variously Men procur'd it: by Strength, by Stratagem; nay, by mere Chance: and, one might add, by violent often and barbarous Methods. Thus in General.

SECT. III.

The Original of our English *Government.*

AS to those who raise our *English* Kings from a Seed of God's own immediate planting, who bring them directly down from Heaven, and surround them with unapproachable Distance and Glory, and with unalienable Right and Title, and Power unlimited; I wou'd have these Men read our *English* History, and they will find the Original of our particular Government also to be entirely various and unknown, and to have been owing at first to the little successful Skirmishes of petty Princes, till from being divided into several Kingdoms, (made up of several Nations) all *England* fell into the Power of one *Saxon* King; whose Successors lost and recover'd it again by Turns, till at length a *Norman*, by Strength of Arm settled it in such a *Divine Right*, as (through several Variations from the Lineal Prince) obtains at present, under the happy Sanction of a mix'd Government: the best of Kings (and a Protestant) being seated on the Throne. The Clergy *and Laity* (Nobles especially) under the *Saxon Government* were assembled together to advise

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the King on extraordinary Occasions. The *Conqueror* certainly acted thus; in whose Time Petitions and Remonstrances were frequent, from the People to the King; especially upon his endeavouring to establish *French* Laws and Customs here: But both before and after him, our Princes govern'd by Methods very Parliamentary; there were plain Contracts between King and People, and a Coronation-Oath was ever observ'd; thus, by degrees, to the Reign of *Henry the First*, in whose Time * Parliaments began to resemble what they are now, and thence to our present Days, Experience of many kinds have *almost* taught us what it is to be *Englishmen* †. Woeful have been the Experiments; the Revolutions and Changes, remarkable; and strange and various the Events; but all happily ending in a Protestant Succession, a moderate Reign, and a numerous Royal Family.

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* *From the Year* 1126, *to* 1133.

† *Particularly the Struggles in King* Charles *the* IId's *Time for the Bill of Exclusion*, &c. *The resisting King* James *the* IId, *and bringing that Revolution to pass. The Trial of Dr.* Sacheverel, *and the opposing the late Queen's Ministry during her last* 4 *Years.*

SECT.

SECT. IV.

All High-flown Notions of a King's Title and Power favour the Pretender.

IT Will be no Secret to let the World know that this exalting of Unlimited Power, and insisting on Hereditary Right for our *English* Kings, were the only Foundation whereon cou'd be built a Prospect ever to introduce the Pretender, and that therefore *Papists*, *Nonjurors*, and other rigid *Jacobites* ply'd this Argument over and over, procur'd (besides numberless Pamphlets) a Book to be written in Folio in Vindication of it; * the Author of which most remarkably got clear of his Trial in the late Reign, with little or no Punishment, altho' the Book be swell'd with Treason against the whole Constitution of *England*; but thus it was, and into a Thousand Shapes were these Arguments turn'd to serve and obtain the grand Design. The only Wonder is, how things so injurious to Mankind in general, and so foreign to the *English* Constitution in particular; nay, utterly destructive of its Interest and Happiness, cou'd be so easily impos'd upon *Englishmen*.

To speak the Truth, these Opinions have been long in Vogue amongst us, insomuch that many ancient Subjects of this Kingdom, renown'd both for Honesty and Learning, have

* *Dr. Bedford*, a Nonjuror.

most warmly (tho' unwarily) advanc'd the Truth and Legality of them; especially Divines, who have made unlimited unconditional Obedience to our Monarchs, as necessary to Salvation, as Faith in our Saviour, and Repentance towards God. These Men told us that the only Form of Government to be met with in Scripture is *Regal*; that, whenever this Affair is mention'd in those holy Writings, 'tis ever in the Language of *Kings*; *The King*, &c. that they are call'd the Lord's Anointed, and that we are to obey them on Pain of Damnation, as that *Power in being* expresly mention'd by St. *Paul*. This I have heard, and of this you may meet enough in Books printed on the Subject *.

But these Men don't consider that this Word (*King*) is made use of in Scripture, as being the most usual Form of Government in the *East*, and therefore hereby are meant and signified all Sorts and Forms of Government, and Civil Policy whatever; and it ought to be remember'd, that if the contrary were true, they might as well exclude *Queens* as Common-wealths, *&c.* from governing; for this the literal Acceptation will do. But this Affair is so far otherways, that in ancient Times Scripture mentions *Ducal* Governments; and the Government of Cities, which was very usual, (every City being a Kingdom of it self and the Districts about it)

* *Vid.* Sacheverell's *Trial.*

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these were more like Common-wealths than Kingdoms of a Regal Sort: Besides, the *Jewish* Form was nothing Regal till *Saul*'s Time; I don't think what Men call their * *Theocracy* reaches this Argument; the *Jews desir'd a King to Reign over them, and to go out and fight their Battles*; and we know they were govern'd by Judges, by Prophets, nay, a Prophetess: so senceless are all the antique Arguments built blindly on the Notion of a *King*, as the only Governour destin'd for Mankind by Almighty God. Further; who will affirm that in early Times no other Form of Government prevail'd; or that Kings were every where absolute? We are well assur'd that long enough before our Saviour, Common-wealths made their Figures in *Greece*, *Italy*, and other Parts of the Earth; and, that they do so now, and that they have done so since, and at the very Time that he appear'd, is indisputably true; so that we must conclude, that the *Powers in being* which St. *Paul* commands us to obey, not only for *Wrath*, *but Conscience-sake*, nay, *upon Pain of Damnation*, were not the *Kingly* Forms of Government alone, but all other Lawful Rulers and Powers whatever.

As ridiculous as the contrary is to Reason and the Nature of Things, it kept its Ground in *England* most successfully in several Reigns, and seldom came to be canvass'd or explain'd without the Peril of the present Monarch. For which Reason a very wise and prosperous

* *Being govern'd by God.*

* Queen of *England*, was remarkable for never suffering one Argument, concerning her Title to the Crown, to be brought into agitation.

In King *Charles* the First's Time, the Tide ran in violence and madness on the Prince's Side; and he, by Advice of his Queen and Ministers, assum'd, and the People refus'd: one insisted, t'other struggled, disobey'd, nay rebell'd, till at last it ended in the most melancholy, wicked and barbarous Murther of that excellent Prince; a Prince! in himself endow'd with many vertuous and valuable Qualifications.

Such a Murther as this being the Extremity of popular Licentiousness, it soon turn'd the Abhorrency quite another Way, and the *Power* and *Title* of the King after this, grew so great Favourites by degrees, that it tempted King *James* the IId to try the Strength of the Argument, when he saw it had well nigh universally obtain'd. But he too fell a Sacrifice (tho' no bloody one) to another Extreme, the inviolable Sacredness of an unalienable Title and unlimited Power in the Crown.

Now, as it is certain that God Almighty has tied down no one Nation on the Earth, much less all of them, to the Regal, or to any certain Way of ruling and administring Power, our Countrymen have been mistaken in this Affair, by imagining that *Regal Power* is only of Di-

* *Queen* Elizabeth.

vine Inſtitution; and by not attending to this Truth, that the *Regal Power* is not the Supreme Power in theſe Kingdoms; not *the Power in Being in* England, as St. *Paul* expreſſes it: and therefore not that Power, Diſobedience to which (ſtrictly ſpeaking) procures *Damnation*. No! the *Supreme Power*, the Legiſlature or Conſtitution, call it which you pleaſe, conſiſts of the King and Three States of the Realm, and theſe are to be obey'd, as the whole Enacting Power, on Pain of Damnation; which, having plac'd the *Execution* of all Laws in the Perſon of the Prince, thoſe Laws are the Rule and Meaſure for him to govern by, as they are for us to obey.

A moſt ingenious, pious, and learned * Prelate, whoſe Works ſhew him a Friend to Mankind, as well as to the Religious and Civil Rights of his own Country, has ſo fully proved the † Unreaſonableneſs and Madneſs of tying Nations down to the next *immediate Heir* in any one Royal Family, that his Adverſaries are almoſt all come over to his Sentiments in this Matter, and are ready to give up this long-contended for Strictneſs of Succeſſion; and no doubt but they do it with Pleaſure and Surprize, to think that a Thing, ſo plain in it ſelf, ſhould ſo long have been kept hidden, and reſerved from them. For what other Reſource

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* *Dr. Hoadly, Biſhop of* Bangor.
† *In his* Preſervative.

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can Men possibly apply to in case of the Incapacity of a Prince, who is so unfortunate as to be born the next Heir, whilst he is unqualified to sustain the Weight and Dignity of a Crown; but to lay him aside, and set up the next qualified Person? And what may more reasonably be often expected, than that Incapacities, in one kind or other, should happen to the frail Sons of Humane Flesh and Blood? Neither a long Descent of Noble and Royal Ancestors, nor the Privilege of being wrapp'd in early Purple, not any of the first and best Privileges of Men, when lodg'd in a Family, being able to secure the *Infant* from saddest Accidents, nor to give Security that the *Youth* shan't be vicious and debas'd, the *Man* both barbarous and savage; so little fit to govern polite and civiliz'd People, as to appear too untractable for the rudest Inhabitants of a mountainous and waste Country. As the Reasoning here is true, so has Matter of Fact born Witness to it; for all the World knows how Thrones have groan'd under some monstrous Princes, and how Subjects have tamely suffer'd those cruel Things on this false Principle, the lightest Part whereof had never been their Fate, had they had Knowledge and Spirit enough to assert their just Liberty, to set themselves and their Country free.

It is worth Observation, that, besides the usual unfortunate Casualties of Mankind, to which *English* Princes are subject in common with the rest of the World, and many there

are which unqualify Men for the meanest Offices of current and domestick Life, as well as the Burthen of a Crown, we of these Kingdoms are afflicted with Pretenders to our Government, the necessary Consequences of whose bare Opinions in Religion (abstracted from every other Consideration) unqualify them to make, or preserve us an happy or quiet People, and this as much, nay more than all other Disqualifications put together. They, by being Papists, being obliged to overturn our Laws, extirpate our Religion, destroy our Property, and deface our Liberty. I am sure any Man who is obliged to do these Things, is not fit for ours, nor any other Throne whatsoever; but, as Papists, these Men are bound by a religious Oath to do this, and therefore are utterly incapable to hold the Reins of *British* Government, though otherways never so well qualified for it, by Birth, Virtue, good Understanding, and every thing else; and this is so plain and easy, that every other Notion on this Subject must be more than unnatural, must be downright irreligious. Nay, the contrary is nothing else but political *Fetishm*, which as justly deserves to be exploded with Indignation, as that which unthinking Men have brought into Religion. It being as absurd, that our kind and good God, who has imprinted on our Minds a Desire of Regularity and Government, that he should necessarily doom us, (who be of his Family Creatures) to suffer all the Outrages and Slavery that a Savage-minded

nded Man ſhou'd think fit to torture us with-
if born to be our King; this Notion is as
worthy of the Goodneſs of God, as to ima-
ie he has, from and to all Eternity, unavoida-
r deſtin'd Myriads of poor Souls to the In-
ts and Torments of blaſpheming and wicked
irits. Sad Rights Divine! and moſt impious
l cruel Notions of the bleſſed Nature of God!
! he too well knew *what was in Man*, ne-
ſarily to ſubject Numbers of them to the mere
ll of any One of them; ſince, under their
ſent Frame, they are capable of becoming
void of Reaſon, Juſtice, nay Humanity; and
length of Time to become even *Papiſts*. As
ſe Things are inconceivable of God, ſo are
y contrary to all Reaſon, and the Nature of
ings. Men certainly are born Lords of them-
ves, and are free to defend Life and ſuſtain it,
er the juſteſt and beſt Methods they are able;
l whenever they give the Right and Title
ich they have to themſelves, up to the Power
another, it muſt be for no other Reaſon but
hopes of finding it more ſatisfactorily pro-
v'd, and deriv'd to them in Societies and Aſ-
ciations, than before. Men therefore ſurely
n give no more than what they naturally and
ginally found themſelves poſſeſs'd of, which
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ves ſafe and eaſy, not to hurt others, or be
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icies He gave, or cou'd give a Power to any
an, or Set of Men, to bind him in Chains, to
k or torture him at his or their Pleaſure.

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A Man must be inhuman to imagine it, and neither understand himself, or the Relation that one thing has to another. But, supposing any one Man cou'd be found willing to give up the Right of himself to another to be us'd as barbarously as he pleas'd, whenever he was in the Humour to treat him thus; surely he cannot make such a Bargain for the rest of his Fellow-Creatures. 'Tis impossible to affirm it; and therefore the Argument is plain on our side, who gloriously oppose Tyrants, and Kings of frantick and savage Minds, of cruel, unjust, and bloody Tempers; in *England* we must add *Papists*; notwithstanding the *Chicane* of a few deluded *Englishmen*, &c. who most impiously pretend to bring Arguments from Heaven to justify Slavery or Banishment, Poverty, and every thing calamitous and evil, out of Complaisance and a Chimerical Notion of Obedience to Superiors, unrestrain'd by any Terms or Conditions whatever: contrary to Original Contracts now existing, contrary to *Magna-Charta*, Acts of Parliament, and many Usages both before and in our own Times.

CHAP. V.

Of RELIGION.

WERE I to account for *True Religion* after the Manner of *Mythologists*, or, those who entertain their Readers with the Beauties of Apologues or Fables, I wou'd derive its Genealogy from some kind *Æon* or ministring Spirit to the supreme God of Heaven and Earth: and from another Being which I wou'd call *Humaneity*, or the good Genius of Mankind, *i. e.* a Being made up of all the dispers'd Vertues and Accomplishments of human Minds: For true Religion is the only Medium, whereby Heaven descends, and is communicated to Earth; and whereby the Powers of human Souls rise far above the Boundaries of this our Globe, or the most distant Orbs, and *reach* the invisible Throne of the Almighty God. I say, whatever might be produc'd *by Invention* on this Subject, we are assur'd that such a Participation as this, whereby Things unseen, and of the most perfect and exalted Nature, are made the Objects of our Understandings, and the Joy and Delight of our Hearts, bespeaks an Original beyond the Power and Goodness of Things created; and is, accordingly, deriv'd and implanted in us by the Only, One, Invisible, Eternal God.

SECT.

SECT. I.

Happinesſ of True Religion.

BLeſſed Privilege of Mortal Men! whereby our Underſtandings are enlarg'd, enlightenſd and delighted, our Wills regulated and taught to exerciſe themſelves about Things the nobleſt and beſt; and the Paſſions and Affections of our Minds preſerv'd from engaging in Objects contemptible and hateful; but allow'd at the ſame time to warm and indulge themſelves in trueſt, becauſe innocent Pleaſures.

Nor are our Minds alone oblig'd to Religion; 'tis the Preſervative alſo and Reſtorer of our Bodies and Fortunes; Health, long Life, and proſperous Affairs, being the infallible Reſult and Conſequences of it.

Theſe were the Beauties and Advantages of Religion, reaſon'd out by the natural Strength and Force of the mere Underſtandings and Minds of Men: But, when reveal'd Notices were ſuperadded and imparted unto them, eſpecially when Life and Immortality came to Light through the Goſpel; then Religion made its brighteſt Figure, and was array'd in moſt attractive and powerful Perſwaſions: Quietneſs of Mind, and Indolence of Body; Appetites govern'd, and Paſſions ſubdu'd; Reputation and Eſteem; Benevolence and good Nature; Forbearance and Forgiveneſs, and every preſent Thing that is valuable and good, being not only the

the certain Effects of it now; but an Assurance being also added, of a Resurrection, after Death, to another Life of endless Duration and unspeakable Bliss.

On the contrary, were I to describe *False Religion* the same Way; I would suppose it to be the Offspring of the Chief of wickedest Spirits in Hell, in Combination with the Evil Genius of Mankind; and shou'd conceive it (as really it is) endlesly Industrious in dispersing Superstitions, Enthusiasms, Error, Infidelity and Blasphemy amongst Men: Setting up unreasonable Principalities and Powers to direct, and regulate Opinion and Thinking; and to censure, distress, persecute, nay murder all those, who wou'd not by Words, and Deeds, by Preaching, Printing, assenting to, nay Swearing, give into every Notion settled by some particular Men, set apart to make Systems and Rules for all the rest of Mankind to think and act by; banishing this noble Exhortation of our Saviour's from off the Earth: *He that has Eyes to see, let him see; and He that has Ears to hear, let him hear*; and then accommodating Men with Eyes, and Ears, and Understandings, and Hearts, and confining them to see and hear, and believe as they were taught, without ever conceiving that they ought to make use of their own Understandings in the Conduct of themselves: And, lastly, I shou'd imagine *False Religion* ever furnishing its Votaries with a Profusion of Arrogance, Positiveness, Imposition and Cheat, and above all, with never-failing

charitableness, Detraction and Reproach. From these two different Views of True and *False Religion*, we may see of what Importance is that the World shou'd be well instructed in the Principles of the former, and that the Practice of those Principles shou'd be every where inforc'd and observ'd: The Necessity is plain, tho' the Accomplishment of either be difficult and has miscarried, as is too evident from the great Success which its Opposite has met with in the World, not only in our own Times, but in the several Periods of Ages past; tho' I think one may, with strictest Justice, affirm, that the World from hence, has felt and labour'd under greater Evils and Wickedness; that more Shadow and Dreams of Devotion, as well as False Worship, have been impos'd upon it, more Ignorance and Superstition triumph'd, more Cheat and Hypocrisy prevail'd; and, in short, more Barbarity, in many Kinds, committed on the account of Religion, since *Popery* (that most corrupt and Heterodox Part of the Christian Religion) has made its powerful Advances in *Christendom*, than all the Remainder of the Earth besides has experienc'd, tho' the Cruelties of many Ages past be added together.

The Pretences to *True Religion* have been so various, and so wicked and notorious have been the Disguises and Fallacies of those, who have had the Advantage of administring in the most perfect Religion that ever yet Almighty God (the only Object of it) reveal'd to Man-

Mankind; that, in discoursing on this Head, we must commence, as before, from the beginning of Things, and deduce the Nature of *Religion* and *Priesthood*, thro' all the succeeding Tracts of Time, in order to see thro' the very Reason of these Things, and to judge rightly of them in the Light wherein they stand at this present Time.

SECT. II.

Of Natural Religion.

Religion is the Worshipping of GOD: which Worship being liable to Variations and Difference; let it be observ'd where it will, it must consist of *Essentials*, and these, whether dictated by Nature, or reveal'd by God, are not in the Power of Men to alter or dispence with; and it must also be attended with *Circumstantials*, which every Man, or Society of Men may omit or multiply, as they shall think proper or convenient.

In a State of Nature the Essentials to Religion seem to have been confin'd to the best Persuasion every Man cou'd arrive at, of the Nature and Attributes of God, from his own Reasoning, Observation, and Comparison of these Things, with the Sentiments of other Men. This, as to the Object; as to the Acts of Religion, Nature cou'd only direct to pray to God, as every particular Man's Heart instructed and taught him, *i. e.* to thank him when he found himself bless'd with Health or

Riches, or any other Temporal Good, as much, or more than was the Lot of his Friends about him: or, when he saw that he escaped any Misfortune or Evil, either after an ordinary, or some extraordinary Manner.

Petition, Deprecation, and Thanksgiving, being the Essentials of Natural Religion, the Circumstantials of these were at first left to every Man's own Choice, *viz.* the Time, the Place, and Substance, or Subject of the Worship; the particular History of which Affairs affords great Variety and Delight.

Whilst every Man thus was his own Priest, and either reason'd, or carv'd out his own God, and made his House its Temple, or what other Place he liked better; and offer'd and sacrific'd, when, and what his own Thoughts suggested to him; questionless as Men cemented into Societies, and got together for Safety and Defence, and plac'd some Man, or Men at their Head, to act in behalf, and for the good of the rest in Civil, Military, and Social Life; so, no doubt but they must imagine that those several Acts of Worship which they singly paid to their respective Deities, were fit to be offer'd up in common with the rest of the Society; that, what any one Member cou'd not pretend to expect, on the bare Strength of his own Performance, might be granted at the joint Petition of them all; there being the same Reason (as they were a Community) for the united Adoration and Service of them all together, as *there was for* their respective Offices in private

before.

before. The Difficulty was how to arrive at an Uniformity and Centre of Devotion, in that great Variety of Sentiments which distracted them about the Nature and Number of Gods, &c. And indeed, what Nature directed Men to in this Case, and what was Fact from the beginning of the World, in several Kingdoms of it, and to Day is the same amongst the Heathens or Pagans, is very well worth our Attention, and, I must say, in some Respects, our Imitation too, altho' we are bless'd with the Privilege of Supernatural Light, and have those spiritual Illuminations added to help our Understandings, which is, and was their Misfortune not to have enjoy'd.

In this Case then we find, that, in every Kingdom or City anciently, the Government or Majority declar'd for some particular Deity, or Deities, and set Men apart to take Care of their Publick Service and Worship, prescribing Methods both to the Essentials and Circumstantials of it: But we rarely or never find that any of the Natives or other Inhabitants of that Kingdom or City, were forc'd or constrain'd to Worship after the *establish'd Way*, or punish'd if they did not. No; far from this, all private Persons enjoy'd their private Inclinations, and pursued their own Ways in every Religious Act: not only erecting particular Images, Shrines, Groves, &c. but dedicating Men and Things, after their own Judgments, to the Use and Honour of whatever God they thought fit; nay further, at their general Place and Time of Publick

lick Meeting to Worship, Sacrifice, &c. every Man offer'd what Oblation or Prayer he esteemed most proper, to please or pacify the Deity to whom he address'd.

And thus also it was, in Length of Time, when Schools, Colleges, and diversity of publick Temples came to be built; the Priests were made by the King or Government, and the common or extraordinary Services of their Gods were answer'd regularly by those Priests, or, as particular Orders were sent them, They, for Learning, Wisdom, or Vertue, being chosen into that Office, out of those Schools or Colleges, and had several Names given them in several Kingdoms, as *Magi* in *Persia*, *Brachmans* in *India*, &c. But then the Government was careless whether the Votary pray'd to *Jupiter* or *Apollo*, or whether their Subjects sided with *Zeno* or *Epicurus*; or any other Person who set himself at the Head of a Religious Party; if, whatever their Opinions were about Divinity, they were found to be equally *Romans*, *Persians*, or *Indians*, whenever the good of the Common-wealth came into Consideration; and we all know what wou'd have been the Consequence, had any of the Emperors of these Kingdoms, tho' back'd by whole Senates, im[illegible] Creeds, at that Time, on the People, or pr[illegible] or banish'd Men, because they believ'd Go[illegible] *Hercules*, or were ready to die for *Aristan*[illegible] Opinions.

and I[illegible]

Not

Nor is this really, or shou'd it be, one Jot, alter'd by the Revelation of Christianity; People in every Kingdom having a natural Right to their own Sentiments still; with which Right nothing shou'd interfere, provided, on all publick Occasions, they shew themselves ready to defend and protect their Country, and are Loyal and Faithful to the Lawful Government thereof. Nay, this Liberty seems to be the Privilege peculiarly of the Professors of the Gospel of Christ, and the very Design of its Institution; Christians being commanded to *search the Scriptures, to try every Spirit, and to hold fast to that which is best.*

And, no doubt, the Consequences of the Bible plainly shew, that this Freedom is the Birthright of every Christian; for, the different Opinions of Christians, (tho' they have one written Word to go by) are almost as many as the Sentiments of Philosophers were about moral Good and Evil, and the Nature of the Gods, *&c.* they not being able to agree at this very Day, neither about Church-Power and Government, the Use of a Surplice, or a Form of Prayer, any more than about the very Objects of some Parts of their Faith, one Man condemning the main Essentials of another Man's Adoration and Practice, and one Christian Church (and she guilty of Idolatry) excommunicating all the rest, as Schismatical, Heretical, and every thing Criminal and Odious.

As to those Men who think this Way, and lodge the Power of Dictating Faith and Conscience in the Hands of a Few, call'd the *Church*, *i. e.* the Priests and Ministers of Religion and holy Things, and derive the Authority of this spiritual Imposition and Tyranny (as they do the Temporal one) from the beginning of the World, commencing from *Adam*, that Original absolute King and Priest; it must be roundly affirmed once for all, that this is a ridiculous Suggestion in it self, and is most plainly contradicted in Scripture: tho' so very fond of this Notion are its Abettors and Friends, that, most oddly, do they make *Paradise* to signify the *Church*, and call *Adam's Expulsion* from thence, an *Excommunication*; not unlike * him, who, writing the History of Councils, vainly began the first of them from the Trinity, because God said, *Let us make Man.*

SECT. III.

Religion trac'd through the Old Testament.

THAT this may appear in its genuine Light, let us take the Bible (that only Guide) along with us, and we shall find *Cain* and *Abel*, and all their Posterity acting in a different Method from this, till direct Revelation laid Men under particular Obligations:

* *Mr.* Baile.

and

and then I will be bold to say, all Things were prescrib'd to Mankind in Conformity to the general *Liberty* at first allowed and pointed out to them.

No doubt, but *Adam* had something of Religion revealed to him; but of any Particulars, besides the Probability of observing a *Seventh-day*, we are Strangers, and how he performed them: the only positive Command that we read of, having been broken by him. And, as to the two Persons abovemention'd, we know nothing of them, but that they worship'd God, each of them, their own Way, as I suppose Men then, and for many Years afterwards, did; but we read nothing any where in *Moses*, of constraining Men to one Method of Religion, and the Worship of God. And therefore our Commentators and Expositors may entertain themselves, and perplex others as much as they please with these Words in *Genesis*, *in Process of Time*, and may hence advance, that, uniform, Annual, monthly or weekly Devotions were then publickly in Use, and what they call a *Church* Establish'd; but it is likely that there is no more intended by these Words, than, that as soon as *Cain* came to Years of Consideration and Maturity, and saw that People and the Knowledge of Things grew fast upon him, he then began to reason about the Nature of God, and what he had learn'd about Religion and Worship, and concluded it proper, regularly to offer some part of the Fruits of the Earth, by Way of Religion, and as an Acknowledgment and Token of Gratitude to

the Great and Kind Creator of him and all the World, and the Donor of them and all other Blessings. And this Interpretation is supported, because it is said afterwards, in *Seth*'s Time, that Men began then first to call on the Name of the Lord; and *Adam* did not beget him till he was 180 Years old; at which Time the Country about Paradise was very well stock'd with People: From all which it is natural to believe that God Almighty neither set *Adam* or any of his Successors immediately apart by direct Appointment to be *Lineal and Hereditary Priests or Ministers* in Holy Things, and to oblige a Church, *i. e.* the rest of Mankind to Worship him, after the very manner prescrib'd by them; nor cou'd *Moses* omit speaking to it, if it had been so; but having endow'd them with Understandings and intellectual Knowledge, left them to Reason out the Nature of Religion, upon what Discoveries were made, as well as of Arts and Sciences, and other Actions of Life, till he shou'd think fit to impart more full Revelations by the several Steps and Degrees, which, in length of Time, we see he did to one particular People in the World, but left the rest of Mankind to use their own Judgment upon the whole Affair of Religion.

We find *Noah*, *Abraham*, *Isaac*, *Jacob*, and *Joseph* making Offerings, and building Altars on extraordinary Occasions; and read of *Melchisedeck*, an Heathen King and Priest, who had no Successors; nor can we doubt, but that,

Variety

Variety of Priesthood, and Worship was now in use in the World; and questionless, whilst the People of *Israel* were in Captivity in *Egypt*, they offer'd up publick Prayers and Devotions to the God of *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob*, and had Persons agreed on amongst them to perform those Offices whenever they had Opportunity; but, when their Freedom was compleat, and they were order'd to institute and observe a Ceremony in remembrance of their Escape from *Egypt*, and the Preservation of their First-born, we find that every Master of a Family perform'd that Ceremony, and kill'd the Passover, altho' it was *Sacramental*; nay, tho' it was the very Act of the instituting of it. Soon after, * when the People were to hear a Discourse between *God* and *Moses*, there are *Priests* mention'd at large, long before the Ordination of *Aaron*, tho' there be no previous Account of them, or their Separation to that Office; and when *Aaron* with his Sons *Nadab* and *Abihu*, and 70 of the the Elders † were to be Witnesses at the Head of the People of God's talking to *Moses* a second time, and sending Messages by him to the People, *Young Men of the Children of Israel were sent to offer Burnt-Offerings and Sacrifice Peace-Offerings of Oxen unto the Lord*; all which Designations of these Men to these Things, are very uncertain, and remain unexplain'd; but in all

* Exodus 13. † Chap. 20.

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likelihood they were perform'd by the Father, or rather the First-born of the Families, because the latter were by God's Command * *dedicated unto the Lord; but might be redeemed* †; and were afterwards superseded by God's Appointment, ‡ the Tribe of *Levi* being set apart for the *Ministry*; and now indeed God form'd a Lineal and Visible Church and State of *Priesthood*, these Men being separated from the rest of their Brethren; and this *Priesthood* cou'd not possibly fail, God having consecrated a whole Tribe to that Purpose, which then consisted of above 22000 Men.

But we must observe, that whilst the *Jewish* Nation was made happy by this Inclosure, and by God's peculiar Dispensation, the rest of Mankind, whereof these were but a small Number, were left in the same Way as before, to serve God according to their own Understandings and Judgments; neither *Moses* or the *Prophets* having Commission to *go out and Teach all Nations*.

God's Doings being unsearchable in all Things, and his Ways past finding out; He, neither having given us the Reasons of many Things, unintelligible at present, nor being obliged so to do; amongst the rest, not having accounted, why Evil and Error were permitted to distract and confound this Earth of ours; or why he did

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* *Exodus* 13. 12. † Levet. 27. 29. ‡ Num. 3. 12.

not

not reveal himself to all Mankind, as well as to the *Jews*; or force the Gospel of Christ afterwards, or oblige it at this Day to take Possession of all the Kingdoms of the Earth. These Things being hid from us, let us have recourse to what he has clearly reveal'd; and entertain our Thoughts with those Things which fall within the compass of our Understanding, and are become our Duty and Care.

Passing by the *Jews* then, and their Oeconomy, which in many Things were extreme particular, and therefore died with their Kingdom and Common-wealth; it cannot but entertain and please us, to begin with a Dispensation that is design'd to have the *Ends of the Earth for its Possession*, and which (notwithstanding a temporary Miscarriage in its Extension) will, one Day, obtain universally over the Face of the whole Globe.

SECT. IV.

Religion trac'd through the New Testament.

WHEN our Saviour came to prove his Divine Mission, which he did by Miracles and Wonders, by fulfilling old Prophesies, and establishing new ones, he chose Twelve Men, and endow'd them with Supernatural Power to carry on the great Work which he had begun, and having finish'd his own Course, left them entire Masters of God's whole Will concerning the *Salvation* of *Mankind*; commanding by speaking, but especially by writing, to communicate it to the World; endowing them and a few others with the Power of *Miracles* at first, till Mens Understandings were convinc'd, and the new Doctrine had made its Way in the World; and having separated them by a special Designation to minister in holy Things, he commission'd them to separate others also, as they esteem'd them worthy of the Employment; promising that the Church shou'd never fail, that *he wou'd be with it to the End of the World*, i. e. that notwithstanding Persecution, Apostacy, and whatever Calamities shou'd happen, there never shou'd be a Time wherein some Professors of Christianity shou'd not be found; and that at last he wou'd call the whole World into a Belief and Practice *of his Gospel*.

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The Church being thus of Divine Appointment, that is, God having appointed Ministers to preach the Gospel to as many as wou'd receive and entertain it, the whole Number of Believers, Ministers and People (where-ever dispers'd) constitute and make up this Church: and where any particular Christians, in a Town or Kingdom, receiving the written Word of God, agree on such or such Forms of Discipline and Order in the Administration of that written Word, these People make up what we call a particular Church, as of *Ephesus* or *Rome*; *England* or *France*. The Christian Church then not being confin'd to the Ministers of it alone; it will be worth our while at this Time of so many different Controversies about these Things, to enquire distinctly what are the *Titles* and *Powers*, both of *Christian Ministers* and the *Christian Church*.

SECT. V.

Title *of the* Christian Clergy.

AS to the *Titles* of *Ministers* in the *Christian Church*, they are most certainly of divine Institution; and, for my self, I must affirm it, as my Belief, that God Almighty instituted and design'd a Superiority, and consequently Degrees amongst them. This is to me visible in the holy Bible, and I am confirm'd in it (I mean Episcopacy) by the unquestion'd Practice and Authority of 1500 Years, from our Saviour and downwards. Nay, I think it of Advantage to the Government of the Church, and most agreeable to the Nature of Government in general. However, I accuse no Man who can't be brought to believe, as I do, on this or any other Subject, and desire Leave to go on in remarking, that as the Title of the *Jewish Priesthood* was Divine, so is that of the *Christian Clergy* also, and therefore their Office ought to be held in the highest Veneration, and their Persons because of their Office. But as every thing admits of Extremes, so does the particular Affair before us, too many being so wild and extravagant in their Notions, as to imagine not only that the establishing a Christian Clergy, but that all Religion is a Political Cheat and Imposition; and others carrying the Necessity of sacred Offices from some Mens *Hands to* so high a Pitch, as to affirm that no *Possibility* of Salvation can be had without them,

them. Since our Saviour's Days, this last Doctrine has been often sent abroad into the World, and we may easily perceive what Set of *Clergy* they were, who perplex'd Mankind with the Severity of it; aiming at *all Power, both in Heaven and Earth*: nor can I but be very sorry to see it reviv'd in our Nation, with so much Vehemence as it is, especially by Men who call themselves *Protestants*.

To speak out therefore as rationally as I can upon this Subject, I think it ought not to be denied, where a lawful *Christian Ministry* is establish'd and can be had, that those Men are very guilty, who do not apply to the Offices of that Ministry for the ordinary Means of serving God, and consequently of saving their Souls; such a *Ministry*, I say, as may be met with in Scripture, or, at least, is not repugnant to any thing that is to be found, on this Subject, in those sacred Books. And yet too many of such *vain* Men are to be found: May God enlighten them, and bring them to a better Mind!

However, on the other Hand, I can't but extremely condemn those Persons who wou'd tie God Almighty down to particular Rules and Forms, and won't suffer Him, in their Opinion, to receive any one Man to Mercy, who dies without passing regularly through all the Offices of a *Christian Clergyman*. Now, as this is fastening Rules upon God, which we are sure He has not oblig'd Himself to observe, so, Reason and Experience entirely confute the

Opinion, that one Lineal Descent of *Ministers* is not only necessary to Salvation, but all their *Offices* are necessary likewise, whether initiatory, intermediate, or dimissory. If you consult what I have observ'd of the History of *Priesthood* and *Ministers* in holy Things, you will find this Way of arguing all along confuted by Matter of Fact; the same hard Dealing still remains to be remov'd from all the present Heathen World; nay, Christians themselves can give no Demonstration that they are secure in this Matter, it being possible that false *Consecrations* and *Ordinations* might have been put upon the Church in the brightest, as well as darkest Ages of it; Excommunicated, heretical, and unlawful Bishops might have convey'd down the holy Mission, and many other Embarrassments, are likely to have so much perplex'd this Affair, that I am sure it is impossible ever to prove the Truth of it. *Papists*, no doubt, have ever found their Account in advancing this Doctrine, *viz. Infallibility*, *Authority* and *Power:* and have the face still to maintain the Demonstration of an *Uninterrupted Succession* of *Ministers* from *Christ* to this Day, notwithstanding the known Impossibility of it, and the particular Schism (amongst others) which lasted for Forty Years together in their own Church; when they had two or three Popes at a time, excommunicating one another, and distinctly *Consecrating* and exercising all *the spiritual* Offices of the holy See. And I *hope our English* Subjects will perceive the Fal-

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lacy and Cheat of renewing this Doctrine at this Time in these Kingdoms, it being to serve a Secular End chiefly, *viz.* the setting the *Pretender* on the Throne: to forward which, This, and all other Acts of their Religion, are no more than mere Pretences and Imposition upon Men. For, if the *Nonjuring Clergymen* be the only *Lineal Clergy*, (which they affirm to be true) reducing thereby the present Church of *England* to an Universal Schism; there cannot any other possible Way be found to extricate our selves out of this horrible Misfortune, but to bring in the right Heir to our Crown immediately, to turn out the present Royal Family, to degrade all our Bishops, Priests and Deacons from their respective Holy Orders, to deprive them of their Spiritual Livings, and to let the *Pretender* name and constitute new Bishops, the *Nonjuring* Prelates consecrate them, and both together ordain a new *Ministry* in the Church; till which be really done (tho' the Design be all Nonsense and Madness) they account our Ministers Antiscriptural, our Religion Heterodox, and our Laws null and of no Force.

These are the Views of these two Sorts of Men; and to serve these Views, God Almighty must be under their Direction, and excluded his Soveraign Mercy, and the Reason and Necessity of Things give way to impudent and unprov'd Assertions. But! God forbid, that in a World of so much Alteration and Uncertainty, any serious and religious Stress shou'd be really laid upon Things necessarily subject to Con-

tingency and want of Proof; such Notions are too severe, and unworthy of a good and kind God; for, as it is not material for the present, or indeed any Generation of Men, that the Titles of the Ministers of God's holy Word to their Orders, shou'd be plainly and demonstrably deduced from Christ and his Apostles, on Pain of losing the Title of ones Claim to Heaven; it being as well that nothing appears to the contrary, and that our present Possession, is as good, as if it were so prov'd; so it is our Duty also to imagine that those Believers in Christ, who die in the Heathen Part of the World, without the Advantage of the Offices of the *Ministers* of *Christ*; or who, for absolute want of better, appoint a discreet and godly Person to officiate in holy Things, are acceptable to God for their good and pious Dispositions, and Intention of Mind, and will save their Souls, by this Means, at the last great Day.

SECT. VI.

Power of the Christian Clergy.

AS the Civil Magistrate's Business is partly establish'd to protect Clergymen in the quiet Administration of their Office, and not to direct them what Doctrines they shall preach, or what Creeds and Systemes of Belief they shall make use of themselves, or deliver to the People; as the Civil Magistrate is to punish Profaneness, Immorality and Vice where-ever he meets it, because it is destructive of Human Society, and of ill Consequence to every Government and State; but, as he is not to call to Question any Subject for Opinions in Religion, or to oblige him to believe in, or worship God after the Way that he prescribes; so are the Clergy to be cautious the same Way; they having no Power to dictate new Doctrines, *i. e.* any, not to be met with, and prov'd from the Bible; nor to force Men into any particular Faith, with regard to the old ones.

The Gospel is open to every Man; and the Ministers thereof are to expound and preach it to the People, after the honestest and best Manner they can! and the People are to hear and examine what they declare unto them, without being constrain'd to any Approbation purely by their, or any Human Authority whatever; being at liberty, by comparing

paring those Doctrines with the Word of God, to believe or disbelieve them, as they in their Understanding and Conscience are convinc'd.

Again, as to Immorality and publick Offence, the Clergy have Opportunities in their Power, first of private Reprimand and Advice, and if that won't do, but if either they or their Congregations are offended at the Wickedness of some of its Members, the same Things are in their Power in a publick Way, till at length they may deny them that Communion, which is the Blessing and Privilege of all Christians, and upon Obstinacy, may at last go further, and forbid them to appear in their Assemblies. This is all that was in use in the Primitive Church, and such Men were not restor'd without publick Marks of Repentance; which Custom the Church of *England* in her Liturgy very piously wishes were restor'd again.

But that Clergymen have a peremptory Power, as such, even upon ungovern'd, unreclaim'd Obstinacy in a sinful Life, or, for Mens persisting in Heretical Notions; by Excommunicating them, to consign them to Eternal Damnation, and that this judicial Act by a proper Efficacy, gives them over to Satan in the literal Sence of those Words, I can never assent to; 'twere much better, I think, to pity such Men, and to pray for them, and then to leave them to *God's* uncovenanted Mercy, if any such Mercy there be. Upon which Argument we

may

may also conclude, that the Absolution of of a Clergyman (consider'd as an Act of Office) does not by a mere absolute Vertue of that Act of Office absolve the Sinner from his Sins; for it is certain, that, abstracted from these two Acts of the Ministry, a sincere, believing, repenting, and righteous Christian will be saved; and an obstinate, habitual, unrepenting, unbelieving Christian must meet a different Fate. And therefore no mortal Man living can utterly and finally condemn or absolve, as not knowing the Hearts and Consciences of Men. And this Doctrine is so true, that at last it begins to gain Ground in a * Nation hitherto as Popish and fond of the Power of the *Clergy*, as any other in the World; and has the Countenance of one of the greatest and most powerful † Prelates therein, and of Numbers of other Prelates, and Inferior Clergy besides.

This seems to be the plain and direct Case of every private Minister of our Saviour's Institution; by which a Christian Clergyman, agreeable to the ancient and natural Notion of *Priesthood*, is to offer up the Prayers, Deprecations and Thanksgivings of the People to God, through the Mediation of Christ, to preach the Gospel, and administer the Sacraments, to exhort, rebuke, instruct, but neither to impose Belief on any Man, or to excommunicate him, for not believing what he himself pronounces for Orthodox and True.

* *France.* † Cardinal Noailles.

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Now, this *Minister*, thus acting, is to be supported by the Civil Magistrate, after the Rights and Customs of the Country wherein he lives; and it is undoubtedly both politick and praise-worthy for *Statesmen* to distinguish the Clergy by Honours and Riches, *&c.* as they shall think fit; but then this is to be esteem'd entirely of a secular Nature, and not, in it self, essential to Vertue and Piety, or the Interest of the Gospel: Power, and Riches, and Grandeur, and Temporal Rewards and Punishments, Threats and Terrors being Things our Saviour never propos'd for the Advantage and Success of his Doctrines: No; the Cause of Truth was to make its own Way at first, and to continue its Figure and Strength afterwards by the sole Dint of its native Vertues and Perswasions, without the Appendix of Force or Fraud, of Racks or Badges of Honour: And we accordingly see how little of the true Christian Religion remains in those Countries where these Things are made necessary to it. The Spirit of the Gospel is all evaporated into every thing but what our Saviour and his Apostles taught, and the Kingdom of Christ become entirely of this World; the whole Procedure of the *Pope* and his Priests being founded on Temporal Things, on secular Power, on Honour, and Riches and the Schemes and Methods of Men; and these (barbarously and antichristianly) are very often employ'd to serve Things, which the Gospel rejects and abhorrs; those

Men

Men under the Umbrage of that, having alter'd the very Nature of Things, decreeing Vertue to be Vice; and Vice, Vertue. Nor can it indeed be expected otherwise, when such a false Tour and Deviation as this is once made. No! the last Extremity must be the Consequence of it. As a Tenure procur'd on the Pretence of God and Religion is the most powerful of any other, so is it likely to do most Mischief, if it be not sincerely and conscientiously apply'd; especially when put into the Hands of Men of Learning and Skill: And, God knows, Melancholy is, and has been the State of those Nations where this has been the Case; all their Misfortunes arising from the secular Doctrines and Power of the Clergy, and from their base Misapplication of things which are of a real *Spiritual* kind: the Miseries of Devastation, Blood, *&c.* which arise from hence (since *Popery* especially prevail'd) having caus'd more Tears and Affliction, more Sufferings of all Sorts, than all other Causes of publick Calamities put together.

N CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

SECT. I.

Of the CHURCH.

AS these things are true of the Persons of particular Clergymen, so they are also of collective Bodies of them, whether Oecumenical, National, Provincial *&c.* or of them and all the rest of Christians consider'd in one Body; or of them and all the particular Believers of any one Kingdom, commonly call'd the *Church* of that Kingdom: For these and all other Assemblies, being made up of so many individual Men, who are in themselves fallible, they must be fallible also when got together, and have no more Power over the *Essentials* of Religion then, than they had, when asunder. That I may not be misunderstood, let us have recourse to what was laid down at first about Religion in general; That it consists of Essentials and Circumstantials, the former of which are not in the Power of any Man or Society of Men to alter and vary; the latter are; and therefore as no single Minister has the Power of dictating to his Congregation any thing not contain'd in Scripture, as Matter of Faith and Practice, absolutely necessary to Salvation, or *of imposing* his own Interpretation of any Doctrine *that is* contain'd in those Holy Writings,

as

as only orthodox and true, and neceſſary to be believ'd as he repreſents it; ſo neither has the Church either of theſe Powers, whatever ſenſe you take the Word Church in: For Chriſt our Saviour is the only Head of that Church, is her only Guide and Governour; he himſelf reveal'd all that he thought neceſſary to Man's Salvation. And this Revelation he has communicated to all Mankind alike; about ſome things contain'd wherein, it muſt be confeſs'd there did amongſt the Apoſtles at the time of the Delivery of it, and ever ſince, has appear'd *Hard-ſayings*; but then *He*, the Author of it, never thought fit by himſelf or any other Perſon, whether Angel or Man, to end theſe Diſputes, and make them demonſtrable and plain to every Man the ſame Way, by any additional Revelations or Explication of all or any Part, or meaning of any Part of what he at firſt deliver'd: And therefore nothing can be truer, than that every Chriſtian muſt by all imaginable Means, ſtudy and make himſelf Maſter of the Meaning of that only Revelation, by Diligence in reading that written Word, (there being no other) by comparing one Part of it with another, and by examining and comparing what other People think of any Part of it, which diſturbs and perplexes him, and then he is at Liberty to form the beſt Judgment about it that he can. But ſince no Man or any Society of Men, can now pretend to Inſpiration, or infallible Interpretation, therefore no one Man's or Mens Opinion can be

definitive, conclusive, and obligatory upon another. There can be no such thing as a *Catholick Church*, which, as such, can determine for Christians, That Church consisting of every individual Christian, who, in this Case, are all upon a Level; Christ alone being their Common-Prophet, Interpreter and Guide; every one of whom are to work out their own Salvation by help of the Bible, and therefore they will not be absolutely directed by one another; not a Layman, implicitly, by a Clergyman; nor the Clergyman by the Layman, nor any particular Church by another particular Church, all particular Churches differing widely one from another. Upon which Foundation, we may now more intelligibly and methodically treat of the Title and Power of the Church.

As to the Title of the Holy Catholick Church, it is certainly of divine Institution, God having appointed Ministers to preach his Word, and having separated Believers from the Infidel World, a Number of whom shall never fail to constitute that Church as long as the Sun endures. But the Title of particular Churches is not Divine, as such; *i. e.* it is not of immediate divine Institution, that in the several Kingdoms of the Christian World, the Governours of those Kingdoms should give sufficient Authority and Power to the whole Clergy thereof, or to any Part of them, to *enact* Particular Articles of Belief, whether *out of the* Bible, Tradition, or elsewhere;

which

which Articles ſhall be the very Creed that muſt ſave the Souls of all the People of that Kingdom, and be the Regulation of their publick Worſhip, and of the conſtant Practice of their Lives: I ſay, ſuch Acts of Clergymen, or Authority of States deliver'd to them to this end, are far from being of divine Appointment; and therefore the Creeds, Cannons, *&c.* decreed by them, are far from being finally obligatory upon any one Chriſtian Man in any Kingdom of the Earth; although it be highly commendable and neceſſary, that in every Kingdom ſuch like things ſhould be inſtituted and ordain'd, after the moſt ſcriptural, orderly and decent Manner, for the furtherance of the Goſpel of Chriſt, and Edification of Church-Members, *&c.* The Power therefore of a particular Church extends not to the Eſſentials in Religion; theſe belong only to Chriſt its Head; *i. e.* ſuch a Church cannot anul any old or eſtabliſh any new Doctrines, neceſſary to guide Mens Conſciences, in order to eternal Salvation; nor to determine Authoritatively for the Judgments of its Members, concerning either the Nature or the Number of theſe Doctrines, nor ought it to be inveſted with temporal Strength, either by way of Coercion or Rewards, to force or entice Men into the Belief or Reception of them.

As I am a Friend to Epiſcopacy in the Holy Catholick Church, and wiſh that Order eſtabliſh'd throughout all the Chriſtian World, ſo am I a Friend alſo to national Churches; it being

being a thing of too loose and careless a Nature, and which would produce greater Differences and Disorders than now are to be met with, nay, it would end in Irreligion or Atheism, to leave the Catholick Church entirely at large, and let every Bishop in his own Diocess, or every Minister in his own Parish, set up Directories, and make Articles and Canons for others, on pain of Damnation, to entertain and observe: Which shews the Folly of *Independency* and the Wisdom and near Accession to Episcopal Government in the Presbyterian Churches abroad: For which Reason, as the Subjects of every Kingdom, should be very tender and cautious how they divide from, and what Exceptions they make against a national Church, because it is impossible that any human Institution shou'd, in it self, be contriv'd unexceptionable and perfect; and that it is impossible also to please the particular Understandings or Humours of every Subject in a Kingdom, and that it is a Thousand times more reasonable and pleasing to God, that particular Men should bear with many things, and conform to 'em for Peace and Quietness sake, (because Time and Opportunity might bring these things into a Posture more agreeable to their Sentiments) rather than distract and tear a whole Nation to pieces by Divisions and Sub-divisions, taking away that mutual Love and Charity, which is the Beauty and Safety of a Nation, and exposing it both to civil and forreign Confusions

and

and War; as I say the particular Subjects of a Kingdom (and Members therefore of a national Church) should give way to the Publick, and yield many things for Peace and Quietness sake, which they could wish were otherways appointed, provided that the Church of that Kingdom requir'd no unlawful Terms of Communion, nor establish'd any Doctrine not to be found in God's Holy Word, or which is directly contrary to the same, or the natural Notions of God and Religion which every Man has that is born in this World; and as a prudent and good Man, wou'd either choose a Kingdom to live in where Church-Doctrines and Discipline were establish'd, which most agreed to his own Notions of these things, or if his Affairs will not permit him to do this, would live quietly in the Kingdom where his Lott is fall'n, and get the best Toleration he cou'd from the Government, for worshiping God after his own Way, without entertaining clandestine Designs, or raising publick Commotions and Rebellions, to pull down the establish'd Form of Church Government, and set up his own in the room of it; so neither ought the Government of that Kingdom or Church to distress or persecute, punish or threaten, those who dissent, or who, in a Christian Manner, call for Amendment and Reformation in what they think amiss: The Matter of Fact in Popish Countrys, shews how reasonable these things are; and *it is evident*, we never should have been

reform'd

reform'd from *Rome*, nor never ſhall reform; whatever is ſtill wanting to bring us to Perfection, if theſe Doctrines be not true, and put well into Practice.

And now that great Degree of their Uncharitableneſs appears, who (thro' Inattention and Ignorance I hope) excommunicate their Fellow-Subjects, and ſo account 'em to be (Soul and Body) in a State of Perdition, reviling them for *Hereticks* and *Schiſmaticks*, becauſe they diſſent from that Church whereof theſe profeſs'd themſelves Members; and much more uncharitable muſt we eſteem theſe Perſons, who go farther, and unchurch whole Nations, becauſe they differ from their own natural Church in Opinions of Religion; not allowing ſome of them the very Names of Chriſtians, for want of that Order, which it is known to have been impoſſible for them to procure at the Time that they reformed. But 'tis to be hoped, that God Almighty will have regard to the Neceſſity of Things; and I hope alſo, there are but few Proteſtants who will affirm, that thoſe Churches had better continued Popiſh and Idolatrous, than not reform without Biſhops, or begin a Church with Presbyters, ſince the Popiſh and Idolatrous Biſhops would not reform along with them. It is my good Fortune, I thank God, that I am perfectly well affected to the Church of *England* as by Law eſtabliſh'd; and *were it not* for the Strength of Education and *Prejudice*, I doubt not but our Proteſtant

Diſſen-

Diſſenters would all conform: I am ſure I think them wrong for not ſo doing; and believe alſo, that the too much Heat and Fury of many Conformiſts, prevents the frequency of this good and peaceable Undertaking. But I am far from conceiving that our eſtabliſh'd Forms are all entirely perfect, and want no new Inſpection; nay, I really think quite otherways; and, as ſome Amendments have been made, and others are prepared, ſo, I pray God, ſoon to bring all the Clergy, and every other Subject of theſe Realms to that even Temper, to that Candour, good Senſe and good Nature, which is requir'd to the commencing, as well as the carrying on of ſo neceſſary and pious a Work; in the mean Time, not thinking that Man to be a Schiſmatick who never was of our Church; or, whoever leaves it, when convinc'd in Conſcience he ought ſo to do; and I heartily abhor all Denunciations and Excommunications againſt them, for ſo doing.

To ſet this Affair in a clear Light, let us ſuppoſe the Chriſtian Church not to be eſtabliſh'd, as yet, under the Protection of any Civil Government, nor endow'd with Power, Authority, *&c.* from the Laws of any Kingdom (which is the Caſe from our Saviour's to *Conſtantine's* Time) but that the Miniſters of Chriſt in ſeveral Towns and Countrys get as many Believers together as they can, and convert as many Unbelievers as they are able, the Biſhops ordaining Miniſters, *&c.* and performing their Offices to the ſeveral Congregations as there is

Occasion for them, and the Ministers preaching the Gospel in the best Manner, and nearest our Saviour's Intention that lies in their Power: administring the Sacraments, reading a Liturgy, visiting the Sick, *&c.* The Question is, how the Case would stand in respect to Heresy and Schism, supposing such Differences in Opinion amongst them, as at present are said to deserve those Names: I can see no more than that every particular Congregation wherein such a Member is, should bear with him, and instruct him, and repeat their Admonitions, and pray to God to enlighten his Understanding; and in case they could not convert him in point of Error, and he declares his Judgment and Conscience, after enquiry, unalter'd and unconvinc'd, I think it very wrong to proceed in a judicial Way, and to excommunicate him from Christ's Church, or deny him access to hear the Gospel preach'd in that particular Congregation; for this is *retaining his Sins* in a literal Sense, by puting it out of his Power to be touch'd at publick Sermons or Discourses, or to have the Benefit of the Prayers of the Congregation.

Thus as to Error, for I have fully spoken to the Power of a private Minister, in his Assembly about Immorality, Profaness, *&c.* But then such a Minister ought and has Power to deny Men the Communion, for Erroneous Opinions of a notorious Sort, and to forbid *'em* to appear in their Congregations, because *of the Offences* they give. And this may serve

to

to let you know what Power a particular Church has in case of other Churches, whom she accounts Heretical, Schismatical, or Erronious: Such a one may by Letter, Writing, or by commissioning able Persons to meet, and treat about their Differences, endeavour to reconcile them into a Unity of thinking and acting with her, and exhort them to embrace the same Faith and Discipline with her; but if they won't do this, but, on the contrary, fulminate and excommunicate one another, they might judge what they pleas'd of the *Power of their own Keys*; but I doubt not but God would have much more Mercy on them all, than they shew to each other, provided pure Judgment and Conscience directed them to their Differences, and nothing else.

And in this Case, I shou'd imagine, that where the Gospel is undistinguish'dly preach'd in many Towns and Countries (which is the Catholick Church) where a particular Church or Churches begin to differ about Worship and Discipline not only, but about Articles of Faith also, and that any one of them arrogantly assumes all the Catholicism and Truth, *i. e.* Infallibility to her self alone, without the Power of Miracles to prove it, or a special Commission from Jesus Christ, the *Head* of the whole Church, and that she excommunicates and damns all other Churches and Persons, who believe not, and do no communicate with her alone; I say, I should suppose her to be the *Schismatical* and Heretical Church, as having

 sepa-

separated herself from the Catholick Church, by denying Communion to any other, and communicating with no other particular Church. The Unity of Faith and Discipline is to be preserv'd, as well as it can, through all particular Churches, to make up the Catholick Church; and I cannot account any single Christian, or any Church of Christians, to be Heretical or Schismatical, in respect of the Catholick Church, who, to the best of his or their Knowledge and Conscience, believe and practice, the nearest they can, to our Saviour's Intention, taking the Scriptures for their only Guide. I should much rather esteem that such, on the other hand, which assumingly sets up for herself, as the only Orthodox and Christian Church in the World, and which upon this Arrogance, excommunicates all others who differ from her.

If any Man says, that, at this Rate I destroy the Nature of Heresy and Schism, and leave no Man under the Guilt of Error, but level Mankind; whether they be true Believers, or whether they be not; truly I answer, that where Men examine the Doctrines of Christ, and can't afterwards believe them according to the Manner which some Men call Orthodoxy, their Consciences bearing them witness, and their Understandings not being convinc'd that way, God Almighty will certainly pardon and forgive them: And then I can't see how any *Man, or Society* of Men will forgive them-

selves,

ſelves, for having excommunicated or condemn'd them for that Belief.

There is certainly known to God, ſo much *Chriſtian*, as well as *moral* Truth, exiſting in the World, and ſince there are ſo many various Opinions about many Parts of it; God who knows them all, and ſees into the Hearts and Minds of every rational Creature, will judge and determine at the laſt Day, according to the Sincerity of Mens Thoughts and Conſciences; and, where they err from any Part of ſcriptural Truth, becauſe they had not Capacity or Opportunity of being better inform'd, he moſt certainly will pardon them at that time, and pity them in the mean while.

There is nothing more true than the *Innocency* of ſome Error, and the favourable Conſtruction that both God and Man ought to put upon invincible Ignorance; the State of which Caſe, after Volumes written upon the Subject by our School-Divines, can amount to no more than this, that the Condition, in the firſt place, of thoſe unhappy Perſons, is plainly declar'd in Scripture, who *ſin'd againſt the Holy Ghoſt*; *i. e.* whom neither Chriſt himſelf, nor his Apoſtles cou'd convince, nor any other Perſon, who, for a time, had the Power of Miracles, and actually did go out and teach all Nations: But their Children and Succeſſors, who feel nothing of the Advantage of their Predeceſſors, and for Hundreds of Years *together*, have been bred up in Turciſm and

Heathen-

Heathenism; these Men sure cannot meet the same Fate; the Apostle having said, even he, who was peculiarly sent to the *Gentiles*, that they who have no Law, are a Law to themselves: All the Business is, that we Christians have Demonstration for our Priviledges and Salvation under the Gospel; and we are assur'd these may be particularly glorious and advantageous to us, both here and hereafter, if we please. But let us not put bounds to the Goodness of God, and deny others all Manner of Salvation, because we are sure of the happiest and most glorious sort of it: The Christian World is hardly a tenth part of our whole Globe, so that we have a great deal of Room for Charity; only this we know, for the Honour of our Christian Saviour, that whoever is in any Method to be sav'd, shall be sav'd only through him, whether *Jew*, *Heathen* or *Christian*; this being an Action worthy of the Son of God, and capable only of his Performance; for, undoubtedly there is no other Name given under Heaven, whereby Men can be sav'd.

The Case is the same also of invincible Ignorance, within the Pale of the Christian Church; the particular Churches whereof, may go on to censure, anathematize, and excommunicate one another (and they again their own Members) as long and as fast as *they please*; but it is certain, that where either Societies or single Men, act according to their Consciences, and the best Informations they

they can have, and the beſt Judgment they can make, God will be gracious unto them, let their Neighbours be never ſo uncharitable and ſevere. I'll explain this by one of the higheſt Inſtances that can be, and that is the Idolatry practis'd by the Generality of the Church of *Rome*: As for thoſe, who, for worldly Ends introduc'd it, Tranſubſtantiation particularly, whereby the Prieſt is all-powerful, as the Church which decrees it, pretends to be infallible; I leave ſuch Perſons to God Almighty, as I do all others who have Opportunities of being inform'd of the Sinfulneſs of it, and neglect thoſe Opportunities; or who have been inform'd, and refuſe the Truth; or, who, out of temporal Ends, ſtill continue in the Practice of the Idolatry of that Church, tho' their Hearts often reproach and accuſe them for ſo doing, (if ſuch as theſe, I ſay, there be, I leave them to God Almighty for his Pardon and Mercy; but I cannot but hope that Myriads of Souls in that Church, may plead invincible Ignorance, they not being able to know that they are idolatrous (in worſhiping the *Hoſt*, Saints, Angels, and Relicks *&c.*) by being denied the Bible, and being educated to a Belief in their Church, and pariſh Prieſt alone.

If what I have ſaid be true of the Power of particular Churches in primitive Times, in reſpect of one another, (for I cannot ſuffer theſe Arguings to go off into nothing, by uſing the Word *Church* in a general Way) *viz.* that they had no Power to impoſe Doctrines, or explain

plain them Authoritatively and absolutely, either to one another, or to their particular and respective Members; or to excommunicate each other, or their Members, if they did not receive, and entertain them so receiv'd; because I cannot but think, that the Commission of remitting and retaining Sins, was confin'd to the Apostles, and some few others, during the Power of Miracles; because I am sure, that many Sins (of Practice as well as Belief) retain'd since their Days, will not be retain'd at the Day of Judgment, and many more Sins remitted since that time, will be retain'd at the Day of Judgment; so I am perswaded that the Countenance which the Magistrate, has, since *Constantine*'s time, given to particular Churches, alters not the Matter, these Powers not being the same in every Kingdom, and it being impossible that any secular Power can add a religious Power of admitting or excluding Members into a sacred Society, of condemning or absolving those Members, of absolute Interpretation of old Commands, or of making new Commands for them, if they, exclusive of that secular Authority, had no Power to do these things of themselves; for the Civil Magistrate has nothing to do with them; Christ is sole Lawgiver in the Church, and sole Interpreter of his own Laws, every Man's own Conscience either excusing or accusing him, both as to *Belief and* Practice; and it is impossible that *any one* should, in these Cases of Conscience *between* Christ and him, believe, think, or

act for another; the Capacity of men's Understandings, and all Grounds of Perswasion being very different amongst Christians, as well as other Men.

So that when a Church, in a Christian State, says, on particular Occasions, let such a Man, for such a thing be, *ipso facto*, excommunicate; if that Excommunication regards those things alone, which the State might as well take notice of, such as Immorality, Substraction of Tythes, *&c.* a Man should be cautious, because a temporal Punishment follows it; but if it were an Act of the Church-sort purely, and grounded on what that Church might call Error, Schism, Heresy and the like, which in my Conscience I could not account so; I should be sorry indeed to offend a Society of Men, but should pray to and refer my self to God, who knows my Heart, to be forgiven and extricated, and should be in no Pain of being damn'd by him at last, tho' I shou'd go to the Grave without removing such an Excommunication: For it is no Sin in me, nor wou'd God punish me for it, to dye under an Excommunication for Heresy, Schism, *&c.* if I, in my heart, didn't nor coudn't think that to be an Heresy or Schism, for which I was excommunicated; no, tho' I should mistake: If I had examin'd, and after considering the Affair had determin'd for the Opinion in which I died: But, if to remove the Terror of that Excommunication, I should declare that Opinion, which others call Error, Schism, *&c.* to be *a Sin also*, because the Church or my Parish Mi-

 nister

nister said it was a Sin, tho' I were not so convinc'd in my Mind, then indeed I die in a Sin, a much greater than the Church or Priest imagin'd before, and I shou'd accordingly suffer for it. The Jews, no doubt, who (in the Gospel) put the Person out of their Synagogue, thought him sufficiently excommunicated and liable to all the heaviest Punishments of that Excommunication; for, they were then a *Church*, and did this judicially and upon sufficient Grounds to them, but, a *Greater* than they, we know, took him to Salvation, notwithstanding their Rigour and Severity against him; and, before this Accident, we find *Jeremiah* releas'd by the Temporal Power, when the Spiritual had pass'd an Excommunication upon him: so that not only a single Man but Societies may have erroneous Consciences; and as they ought not to fulminate one against another, so neither ought they against private Men for bare difference in Opinion.

CONCLUSION.

TO Conclude: Were any *Layman*, (the poorest *Peasant* for Instance) pressing me for a thorough Sketch of Instructions in the Matters before us, I should first bid him constantly attend to the Reading of the *Holy Scriptures*, both in publick and private. I *should then* advise him, to reconcile himself

to

to a Belief of all the Articles of the *Apostles Creed*; without entring into the many particular Arguments and Disputes, which speculative Men have rais'd about them: And to a suitable Practice of them, of the *Ten Commandments*, and our *Saviour's Sermon* on the *Mount*. I would assure him, that these Things are necessary to Salvation; and, that little Learning, and not much Labour of the Understanding, were requir'd to qualify him to become Master of them, by a due Application for the Help of the *Holy Spirit of God*.

But if he would go farther, and desire me, as a *Clergyman*, to be his Interpreter and Guide in Things of a disputed and intricate Nature, I would fairly tell him, That truly I contented my self, in order to please my God now, and to enjoy him hereafter, with observing the Rules which I had given him; and would freely own, that there are many Things in *Scripture* which I did not thoroughly comprehend, and which are reserv'd to be discover'd in Times to come.

I would then tell him, That, whatever Opinions I should deliver, I could in no ways *authoritatively* impose them upon him, as only true: And that no earthly Power whatever could do it, whether *Church-Power*, or any other: But, that for these, and the whole Conduct of his Life, in regard to eternal Salvation, he must approve himself to his *own* Understanding and Conscience; for, by these alone God would judge him at the last Great Day. *In this Case*, I would shew him some Differences

rences between the Churches of *England* and *Rome*, by way of Warning against all imposing, *Coercing* Churches whatever; and would expose the *latter*, for assuming to make her Expositions and Decrees equal with, nay superior to the *written Word of God*, and for damning Men for not believing in *Her* and them: But, that I knew no *Church*, or *Church Minister*, who had such a Power; owning my self to be no more than a Subject and Member of the Kingdom of *Christ*, as well as he; and therefore unable to absolve or condemn Men; This belonging to *Christ* alone, our common *King* and *Head*; he knowing the Hearts of all Men. But, being call'd to the Honour of Administring in *Exernal Religion*, I would give him all the Assistance I could this way, *i.e.* would preach to him; pray with, and for him; give him the Benefit of the Sacrament of our Saviour's Body and Blood; and, if he would *press* me to it, would, upon examining into his *Sincerity*, read an *Absolution* to him, since prescribed, in such a Case, by the *Church of England*: But I would also tell him, That the Benefit of that *Absolution* depended entirely on himself, not on me: That I had no Power to forgive Sins; but that, if his Heart was upright, and he had approv'd himself to God, he would be forgiven, whether I read this *Absolution* to him, or not: For I accounted my self no more than an *Assistant*; and therefore very far from being either the *Author*, or *Dispenser* of his Salvation.

When

When I had gone thus far, I would very much enlarge on the Nature of *Charity*: I would advise him to think modestly of himself, his Church, and Party; and not to arraign and condemn; no! Not to censure or slander others, because they don't think as he does. I would shew the Lawfulness and Obligation of communicating with the *Church of England*; would exhort him to attend her publick Worship, and to apply to all the reasonable Functions of her *Clergy*: But then I could say this only in a friendly Way; for, that neither I, nor could the *Church of England*, denounce against him, for not so doing.

I should add likewise, That I wish'd the Legislature would think of some other Proof of Men's *Loyalty* and *Affection* to His Majesty and His Government, than the Receiving the *Sacrament* of our Saviour's most blessed Body and Blood; because this, not only is not a real Proof of it, (their greatest Enemies taking it every Day) but, that I reckon'd it *Sacrilege*, i. e. a Stealing of the consecrated Elements; Things! of an holy and separate Nature; Things! which express the highest Act of Worship in the Christian Church, and applying them frequently to a civil and *profane* Use alone: Nor could I forbear shewing the usual impious Consequence of this; its being *desecrated* by the most unworthy of Participations: So unworthy! That the Nation may expect to be visited on the Account of it. Nor would I fail to answer those who say the Thing is

lawful

lawful and neceſſary, and that the Perſons concern'd muſt look to theſe Conſequences; by declaring, That this is no Vindication of it, ſince *OTHER WAYS AND MEANS* of proving our Fidelity to the Government may be found out; by which Means theſe horrid Conſequences might be prevented: For this particular Act is ſo ſolemnly ſet apart by our Saviour for religious Uſe alone, and is ſo guarded by requiſite *Preparation*, and by ſevere *Denuntiations* againſt thoſe who don't make uſe of this *Preparation*, that I will not expreſs what I think of overlooking this Conſideration, and of *forcing* Men either to ſtarve, and not ſerve their Country, or elſe to go againſt their Conſcience, and trample on their Saviour, to ſhew their Loyalty to their King.

I would conclude all, by ſhewing him the Fallacy of the Cry of *The Danger of the Church*, and the real Deſign of thoſe who lately work'd up the *Power* and *Title* of the *Crown* and *Clergy* to the higheſt Pitch; particularly I would explain their Aim in *Unchurching* Proteſtant Churches Abroad, and raiſing Terrors from the Power, *&c.* of Diſſenters at Home; telling him, when the *Sacramental Teſt* was paſt, how a certain * Advocate for it own'd, that but about a *Dozen* of *Juſtices of the Peace* were diplac'd; and that the laſt † Author on this Subject ſays, in 1676, the *Diſſenters* (*Papiſts*

* *Dr.* Swift. † *Dr.* Sherlock.

(*Papiſts* included) were but *One* in Twenty in the Province of *Canterbury*: nor would I omit, that the Bulk of *Proteſtant Diſſenters* is in *London*, and that here there are not one in many Hundreds, and much leſs in the remote Parts of the Kingdom: So that People may Harangue, and diſturb themſelves, and terrifie others, as much as they pleaſe, with old Stories, and new Fears: But, the Truth is, this Spirit is abated, and goes on to abate, and will abate; the little Exceptions which were once made formidable, being worn out, and there being not one thing peculiarly great or good, attractive or powerful in the diſſenting Scheme, beyond what the eſtabliſh'd Church can boaſt of; nay the Preference being on the Church's Side: I wou'd tell him, in Addition to the Decay of this Spirit, that no forreign Power can invade us in Defence of it: But, that *Jacobitiſm* ſo encreaſes, that their Congregations now, on *Sabbath* Days, are thrice more in Number than before the Rebellion; and that treble the Number of Souls appear at thoſe Congregations; promiſing, on the ſmalleſt Apprehenſion of *Danger*, to be the Firſt who ſhou'd cry aloud, and warn my Countrymen, againſt *Proteſtant Diſſenters*: But, that I ſhould be laugh'd at to do it now, ſince they have ſo lately been known to joyn with us againſt the common Enemy, and are ready to do it again on the next Occaſion that ſhall offer.

Having

Having ended what I had to ſay on theſe important Subjects, in the moſt plain, free and charitable Manner; I can't do better than finiſh all with this glorious Collect in our publick Liturgy.

O *Merciful God, who haſt made all Men, and hateſt nothing that thou haſt made, nor wouldeſt the Death of a Sinner, but rather that he ſhould be converted and live; Have Mercy upon all* Jews, Turks, Infidels *and* Hereticks, *and take from them all Ignorance, Hardneſs of Heart, and Contempt of thy Word; and ſo fetch them home, bleſſed Lord, to thy Flock, that they may be ſaved among the Remnant of the true* Iſraelites, *and be made one Fold under one Shepherd, Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, World without end.* Amen.

F I N I S.

E R R A T A.

Page 88. Line *antepenult*, after *ſome* add *particular*. p. 104. l. 16. for *natural* read *national*.